SPECIAL

Q

EDITION

Never MIND THE JUBILEE

HERE'S THE TRUE STORY OF

PUNK!

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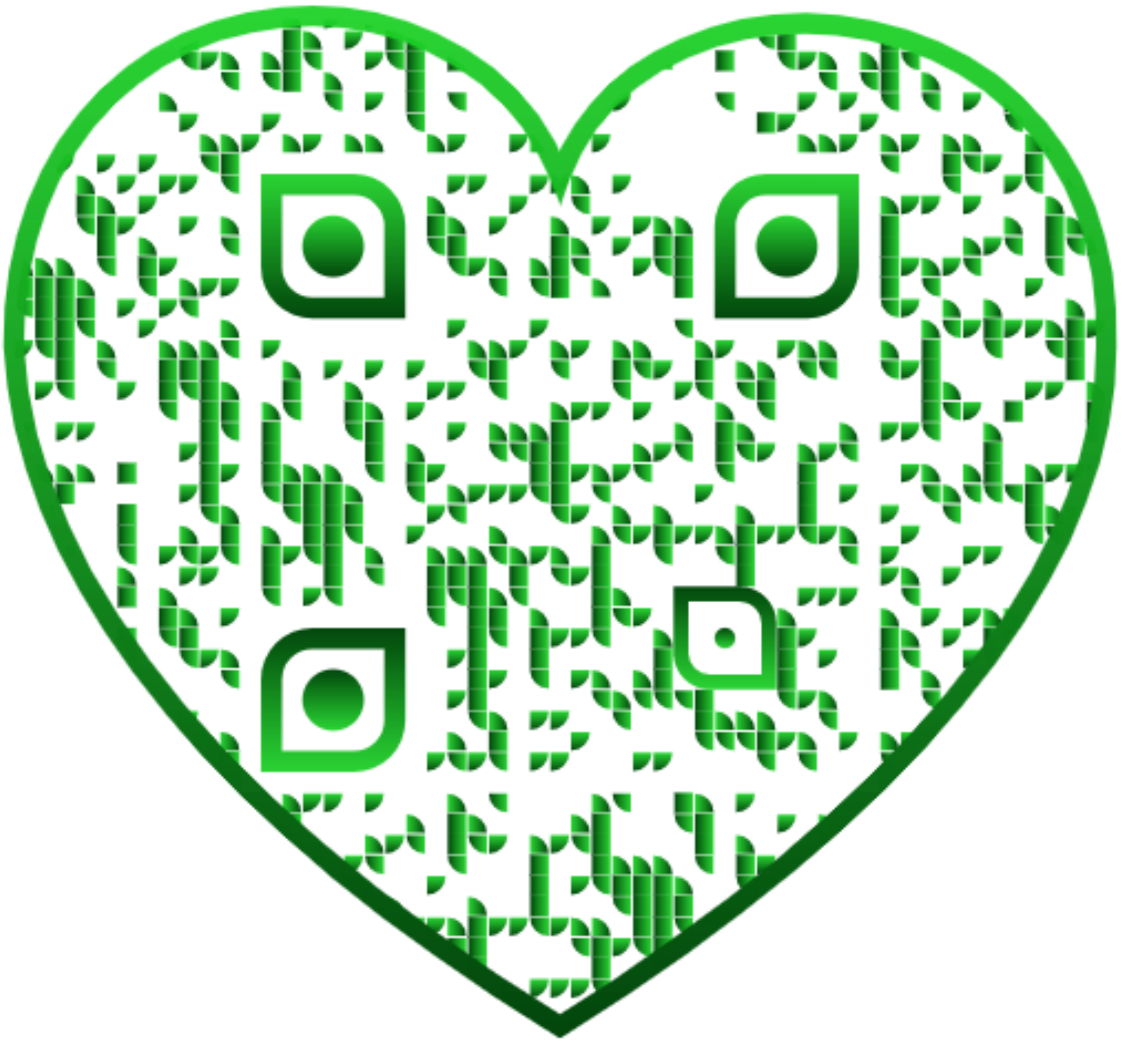
ALL THE BANDS, ALL THE BOLLOCKS AND THE 100 BEST PUNK ALBUMS OF ALL TIME



MUSIC SOUNDS BETTER WITH

Britain's Biggest Music Magazine

ALL THE BIG STARS, ALL THE BIG ALBUMS REVIEWED & RATED

EVERY FOUR WEEKS

Foreword

By Deborah Harry

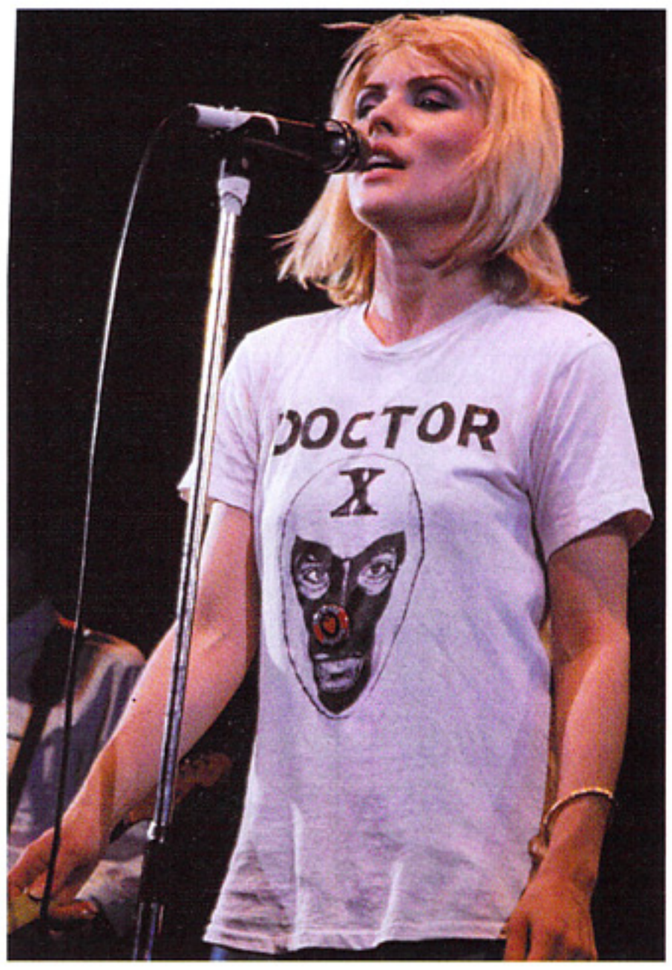
I remember that first gig in England so well. We played Bournemouth, we'd been told that that was *the* gig to play. Hot, wild and so very exciting. The audiences were so demonstrative and tribal. They danced and they slammed and they jumped and they spat. American audiences were much more conservative. It was funny – we were so successful in the UK that people thought we were British, both in Britain and the United States.

The punk scene in New York started in 1973. It was a very small scene, undiscovered and only really mentioned in the local press. It hadn't been developed or commercialised or exploited. The big thing for us was when Dr Feelgood came and played in New York. They weren't really a punk band, but they were the first British influence in that direction.

In New York, punk came out of a sort of camp sensibility. Contrary to the United States, the punk movement in the UK was much more political, and we could see it as soon as we got there. Everybody was very outwardly driven and politically minded and it was all in the music. It was really all about their economy because their economy had turned to shit. A great percentage of people were on the dole, and there really was no future for these kids. Ireland was in a complete state of ruin, and there was war all the time, right in the British Isles, there was war. People forget what a wreck the place was in the early 1970s.

Everyone was aware of Suicide. They were a strong influence. Al [Vega] was completely mad. By the time he finished a show he was bloodied and destroyed. He really was committing suicide every night onstage. Another thing we appreciated in the UK was that in spite of the influences of R&B and blues on British rock, there was still a tremendous Gaelic natural influence in the sort of melodic sensibilities and some of the vocal techniques they used. The music was great! The Stranglers and The Clash were great, Siouxsie Sioux was great, I liked The Slits and Poly Styrene.

The Sex Pistols were, of course, wonderful. The music was original, both melodic and hard at the same time, and they reminded me of Beethoven, they were so grandiose. They really did manage to pull off the great rock'n'roll swindle. The whole execution of that band was based on criminality. They weren't worried about having credibility or not, they existed entirely in their own realm, and their whole thing was to do with anarchy. Malcolm had come to New York and dressed the Dolls up in red patent leather and hung a big hammer and sickle flag behind them but nobody rose to the bait. Nobody thought David Johansen or Johnny Thunders were into politics, it was obviously just the image. Whereas one could believe that Johnny Rotten and those guys were politically oriented. They had the rhetoric down, and they also wanted the money. And they got all that money just to get off the label! The Great Rock'N'Roll Swindle!



"Punk is still around. For kids now it's the first real expression of breaking away."

The fashion that came out of it all – that low-tech fashion, nothing was designer – it was really workmen's clothing made to look hip, ripped up and studded and funky. Some of the kids following the scene – who really were part of it even though they weren't in bands, like Sue Catwoman and a few others – they had a great tradition of creating their own looks. Some of them really had very distinguishable personae. One prevalent thing that I noticed in England was the tradition of dressing according to politics that has gone on for centuries. Even the kind of music that you listened to or the kind of motorbike that you drove, it all indicated your economic and political statement. It came through everything in your life, through your music, through your dress, through where you hung out. It was very obvious, very classified. I think punk has had a lasting effect. Even though now anybody with style stands out like a sore thumb, punk is still around. There are vast numbers of kids who actually go through a punk stage in their lives. It's a kind of bursting out, a first real expression of breaking away.

Deborah Harry
April 2002

PHOTOS: GEORGE BODNAR/IDOLS, BARRY PLUMMER

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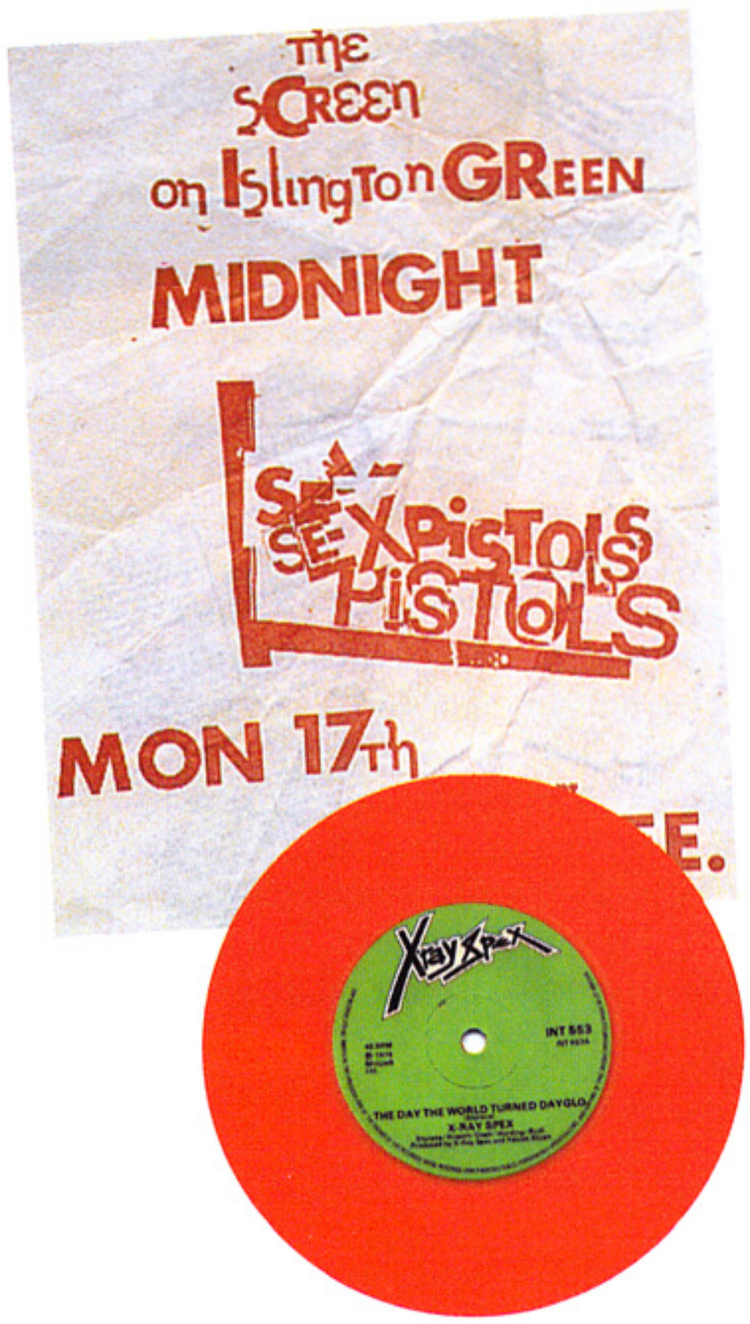

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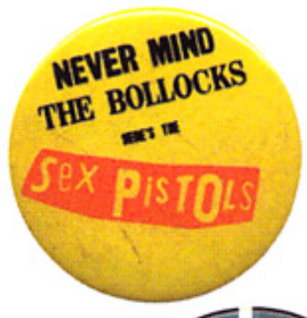

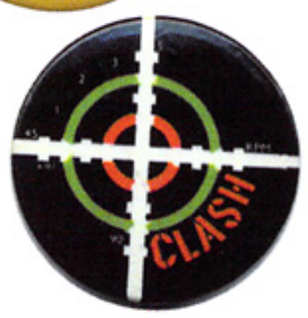

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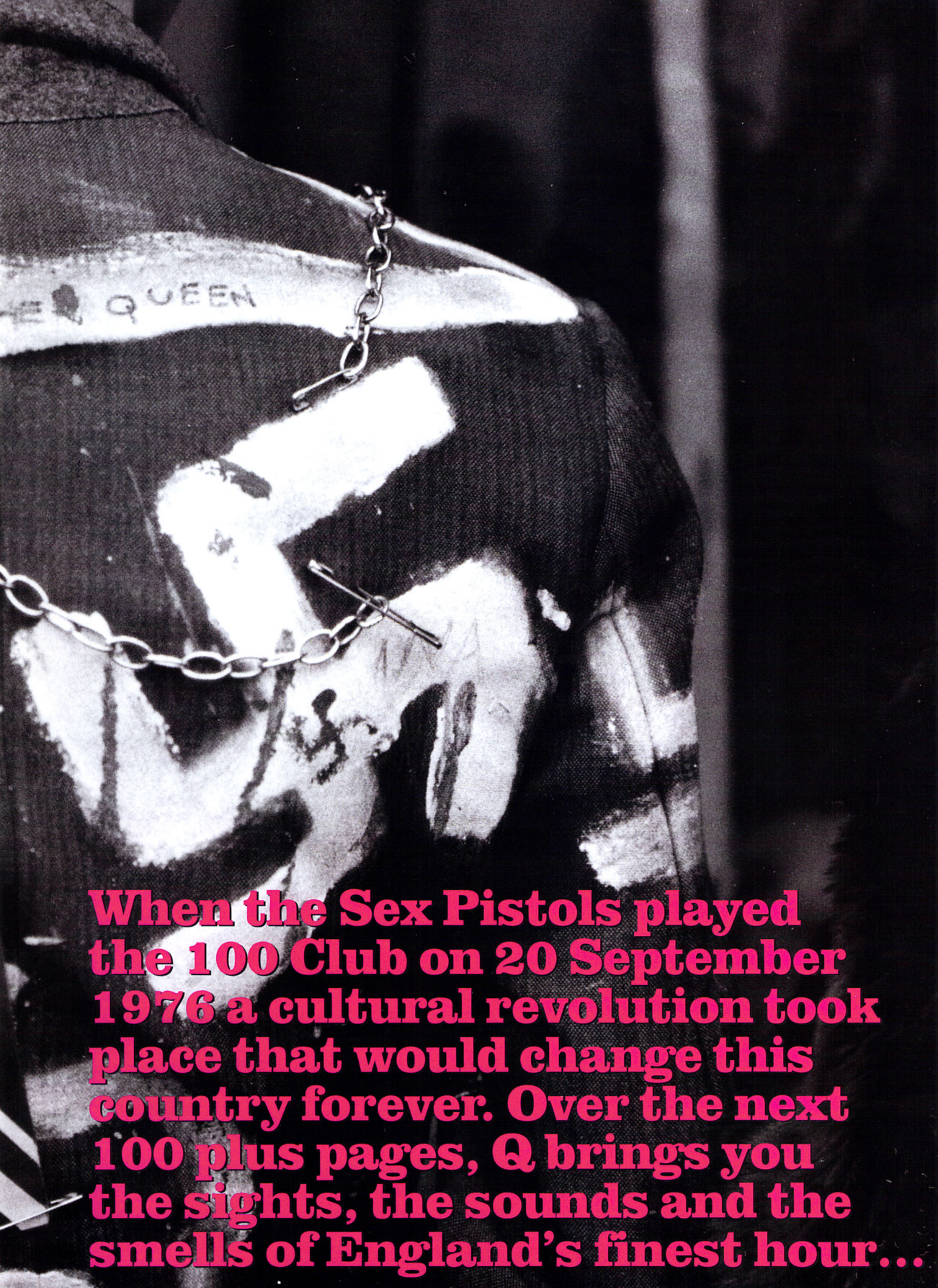


When the Sex Pistols played the 100 Club on 20 September 1976 a cultural revolution took place that would change this country forever. Over the next 100 plus pages, Q brings you the sights, the sounds and the smells of England's finest hour...

UK DECAY

Great Britain was a septic isle in 1975. The streets were filled with garbage and the dole queues were growing. Perfect conditions, says John Harris, for punk to flourish...

PHOTOS: REX, LONDON FEATURES INTERNATIONAL

In the week that ended 12 April 1975, the British singles chart was in a funny old state. At Number One sat Bye Bye Baby by the Bay City Rollers. The Sweet were immediately below them, with Fox On The Run. Then came Guys And Dolls' There's A Whole Lot Of Loving, The Goodies' gigglesome Funky Gibbon and Kenny's Fancy Pants. A little further down the hit parade was Mike 'Runaround' Reid, with his rendition of The Ugly Ducking. Five places below him was something called Skiing In The Snow by Wigan's Ovation. That year, it was hardly an atypical rundown.

1975's albums were scarcely more inspiring. 1975 was the year of Wings' Venus And Mars, a gleaming musical vacuum that contained a version of the theme from Crossroads. John Lennon turned in an album of hack rock'n'roll covers. Pink Floyd fans were enraptured by Wish You Were Here, but anyone after a quick pop fix needed only to glance at the track-listing: Shine On You Crazy Diamond was succeeded by a reprise entitled Shine On You Crazy Diamond Parts 6-9. King Crimson managed a live album that included a song called Larks Tongues In Aspic (Part II). Like, yowsa.

Hanging over a great deal of the period's music was a sense of the dream of the '60s turning fetid and tedious: the mutation of psychedelia (garish, exciting) into prog rock (bilious, pretentious) perhaps says it all. For some of those who had experienced the previous decade's tumult first-hand, this was an alarming turn of events. "In the mid-'70s, we had to turn the culture around," says Malcolm McLaren. "We had to say, Oh my God – what did the '60s bring us? *Nothing*. After this continual drug-induced abuse of ourselves, we all woke up."

Sprinkled around London, meanwhile, were a latent constituency of younger minds, whose frame of reference was a little more recent. For them, the tedium of '75 represented a muted finale to the glam era: having been disciples of the likes of Bolan, Bowie and Roxy Music, they had watched such acts either fall into a creative tailspin or move into such a lofty orbit that it was impossible to feel connected to them. Worse still, nothing worthwhile had arrived by way of a replacement. "It was the real fag-end of all that," says Glen Matlock. "In London, people were a bit lost – they didn't really know what to get into next. The only thing that was accessible was pub rock. There were a few good things in there, but a lot of them were second-rate R&B. Someone had been a roadie for a big group and made it to the States, and then come back and formed a bar band."

Up in Manchester, a would-be impresario named Tony Wilson was working as a presenter for Granada TV, hoping that he might soon be able to front a music show. In the abiding climate, however, things didn't look good. "The years '73, '74, '75 were unbelievably awful," he says. "First of all, you watched all your heroes from the '60s grow fat, limp and pointless. You know, how many bad Van Morrison albums did you buy before you finally stopped? And the people who were happening were this pompous, sententious fucking crap. People forget how bad it all was. Two words: Rick Wakeman."

Between pub rock, prog rock, decayed glam rock and The Goodies' Funky Gibbon, there was reason enough to work oneself into an angry lather. Worse still, the mid-'70s threw up a much more earth-shaking concern: the unravelling of the post-war consensus that had kept Britain on a relatively even keel. In 1973, the Yom Kippur War led to a four-fold increase in the price of oil. Among countless knock-on effects was a sudden fuel crisis, and a 10 per cent jump in retail prices. The aftershocks went on for the rest of the decade: spiralling wage demands eventually led to the wage freeze that would explode into the Winter Of Discontent; by 1977, the UK was forced to take out a last-ditch loan from the International Monetary Fund.

When it came to life's more mundane aspects, the

"People forget how unbelievably awful it was back in the mid-'70s. Two words: Rick Wakeman."

Tony Wilson

social tension of the period meshed with that most celebrated of punk bugbears: an inescapable sense of boredom. Irony-tinged TV programmes have long characterised the '70s as a Day-Glo fun-fest, all Spangles, sherbert dib-dabs and pogo sticks. The reality, unfortunately, was altogether more drab. Gazing back from the modern standpoint, it is difficult to understand why some furious youth revolt did not stampede across the country sooner: what with three channels of television, half-day closing and nothing more mind-expanding on offer than another weekend on the Double Diamond, something was surely bound to give.

In The Rotters Club, his beautifully-observed novel about the decade, Jonathan Coe depicts four colleagues meeting in a pub. "The tables in which their faces were dimly reflected were dark brown, the darkest brown, the colour of Bournville chocolate," he writes. "The walls were a lighter brown, the colour of Dairy Milk. The carpet was brown, with little hexagons of a slightly different brown, if you looked closely. The ceiling was meant to be off-white, but was in fact brown, browned by the nicotine smoke of a million unfiltered cigarettes. Most of the cars in the car park were brown, as were most of the clothes worn by the patrons. Nobody in the pub really noticed the predominance of brown, or if they did, thought it worth remarking on. These were brown times."

With such images in mind, it does not take much of a leap of the imagination to think of Wings, Guys And Dolls and Kenny as brown music. Slowly, however, flashes of an altogether more colourful universe began to make themselves visible. The arrival of punk in the UK came in two waves. Firstly, there were the records from the States that spoke in a new, uncompromising musical language: Patti Smith's Horses, released in December 1975; Television's debut single Little Johnny Jewel, put out in America that autumn; the Ramones' first album, which dropped into Britain's

1977: when two tribes went to war. (Right and below) Yet the kids were alright.

record shops the following summer. In addition, there were the first manoeuvres of the Sex Pistols.

"I read one of the reports from New York in the NME: we started reading about Television, the Ramones, Talking Heads," says Mark Perry, the one-time editor of Sniffin' Glue And Other Rock'n'Roll Habits. "At the same time, in early '76, the Sex Pistols were starting to get live reviews, and in about June or July, you had the cover of the Melody Maker with the punch-up at the Nashville Rooms. Two things were happening on either side of the Atlantic, but they seemed to be very much the same."

Underpinning much of this was a slowly-growing social milieu, brought out of its box bedrooms by the whispers of a sea-change, and delighted by the discovery of like minds. For many of them, the period before punk had represented isolation and bafflement: the quintessentially adolescent feeling of surveying the world and finding oneself at right angles to just about everything. "I didn't have friends I hung out with," says Siouxsie Sioux. "But round about 1975 was when I started to meet people I could relate to. That was what came to be known as the 'Bromley contingent'. People like Steve Severin, Billy Idol, Simon Barker. For the first time ever, I didn't feel freakish. It was a very strengthening feeling. I came across nobody who was narrow minded or sexist or racist or an arsehole. That had never happened before.

"And what's endearing about what happened is the way that it was very innocent. It was a genuine, unpretentious coming-together of people that wasn't industry-related, and it was pretty much despised by the orthodox media. For five minutes, a beautiful five minutes, it really was self-perpetuating, and there weren't any particular reasons why things happened. Days and weeks seemed like very long stretches of time. A lot happened very quickly."

In the modern age, the people behind such developments would have to count down the seconds until it was leapt upon by the press, accorded an item on Channel 4 News, and then readied for the predictable backlash. The '70s were different: it was part of Britain's sleepwalk through the period that, for an inordinate amount of time, no one seemed to notice this new breed of refuseniks. The result was that punk was given time to work its wonders; for aspirant musicians to get the message – "the idea that you should get onstage and hit your instruments with passion and make a fucking noise," as Tony Wilson puts it – and then pass it on.

PHOTOS: REX

When the UK reached the long, terrifyingly hot summer of 1976, the upsurge reached critical mass. This being a British story, the importance of the weather cannot be overstated: with the temperature flying into the '80s and the tarmac slowly baking, the '70s expanse – the sticky café tables, the blighted high-rises, the overheated pubs – looked tawdrier than ever, and Britain's latest revolt was brought to boiling point.

In fact, the punks were acting out an age-old archetype of disturbance. Four centuries before, Shakespeare had written Romeo And Juliet: that drama of young passions that finds an insightful young buck scenting all manner of disorder. "The day is hot, the Capulets abroad," says Benvolio. "And if we meet we shall not scape a brawl/For now, these hot days, is the mad blood stirring..."

Class of '77

SEX PISTOLS

Swearing on telly helped make the Pistols become the most dangerous band in the world. But, asks Pat Gilbert, are they still as shocking now as they were then?

THE FILE

Personnel: Johnny Rotten (vocals), Glen Matlock (bass), replaced by Sid Vicious in 1977, Steve Jones (guitar), Paul Cook (drums).
Hometown: London
Formed: Summer 1975
The gameplan: To destroy all rock'n'roll.
First gig: 6 November, 1975, St Martin's School Of Art, London.
First record: Anarchy In The UK (November 1976).
Biggest UK hit: God Save The Queen (Number 2) May 1977.

Bill Grundy: ...Go on, you've got another 10 seconds. Say something outrageous.
Steve Jones: You dirty bastard.
Grundy: Go on, again.
Jones: You dirty fucker.
Grundy: What a clever boy!
Jones: You fucking rotter!
Thames Today show, December 1, 1976

For TV watchers on the evening of the Sex Pistols' infamous face-off with Bill Grundy, the choice of alternative viewing looked something like this. On BBC1, the evening schedule kicked off with the current affairs programme Nationwide, hosted by the inimitable Frank Bough. After that was The Superstars, billed in the Radio Times as "a contest to find the sporting superstar of Europe". Switching over to BBC2 – an action which back then actually involved getting out of your chair and wandering over to the television set – you'd find Kenneth Kendall reading the news and a new play starring Tom Conti. Just to show that viewers suffered then as now, the evening was rounded off by an episode of Last Of The Summer Wine, where no doubt Compo ended up hurtling down a vertiginous hillside in a rusty old pram.

From today's perspective, the world the Sex Pistols swore at has already gained the patina of period charm. In 1976, there were no mobile phones, video-recorders, CD players or personal computers. Cinema looked to be in terminal decline. There was no Channel 4, MTV or cable, and the BBC ended its nightly programming with a performance of the National Anthem.

It wasn't just a different world in entertainment, either. There was free dental care, milk in schools and, if you didn't want a proper job, you could sign on the dole or else go to art-school. One of Pistols bassist Glen Matlock's abiding memories of the punk era was, bizarrely, the lack of traffic at Shepherd's Bush Green. "In those days, the roads were virtually empty," he said, recalling a trans-metropolitan trip in his beloved Sunbeam Talbot. Worse still, he added, thinking back to the London of 25 years ago, "all the pubs closed in the afternoons. If you wanted to carry on drinking you had to get some cans from the off-licence. Imagine that."

Broadcast by Thames Television, the Thames Today show went out only in the South-east. But the impact of the Pistols' appearance was seismic, making national front-page news the following day. The furore stemmed from the fact that, in the mid-'70s, long before Jools Holland's "groovy fuckers" remark, it was unthinkable that a pop musician – anyone, in fact – would swear on prime-time television. True, theatre critic Kenneth Tynan had caused outrage when he'd said "fuck" on the Beeb back in 1965 – but that was on a late-night arts programme. This was a popular, early evening show watched by parents and their children. One upset viewer was a 47-year-old lorry-driver called James Holmes, who reportedly was so incensed that he kicked in the screen of his TV.

"Our lyrics were too damn near the truth for the establishment." John Lydon

Grundy had been one of the first television reporters to interview The Beatles, in 1962, and the "Tell me about the new album, boys?" innocence of those early pop encounters remained the way to question musicians well into the '70s. But Grundy, the worse for a few drinks and riled that he was interviewing a group he knew nothing about (Queen had been his scheduled guests), obviously felt the Pistols required a different tack. He steamed in with a provocative comment about their £40,000 advance from EMI.

Seeing the footage today, you're reminded of just how outlandish the Pistols must have seemed, even before they opened their mouths. Sucking yobbishly on a roll-up, and looking like a bricklayer who's walked by accident into a sex boutique, Steve Jones sported leather strides and a T-shirt with a large pair of tits on them. Lydon was cowed and rat-like, his spotty face bearing out a squat-land diet of speed and lager. Siouxsie Sioux, part of the group's entourage, has peroxide locks and an unflattering Clockwork Orange-inspired get-up. The term "punks" seems fantastically apt.

The Sex Pistols' brutally cropped, spiky hair, long since a fashion statement, was a genuinely startling sight in the mid-'70s, an era in which Brian May's flamboyant Pre-Raphaelite tresses reflected where most hair was at.

Steve New, later of The Rich Kids, remembers unsuccessfully auditioning for the Pistols in the hirsute early summer of '76. "It was odd being in this room with these four guys with really short hair," New, then only 16, recalls. "No one looked like that at the

Glen Matlock was soon kicked out of the band for crimes against punk fashion. The 100 Club, 1976.

PHOTOS: RAY STEVENSON

Dirty Rotten scoundrel:
Oooh, stop it John! You're scaring us!

Sid gets nicked for being drunk in charge of a windmill, Notting Hill, 24 May 1977.

Cream of the cropped: the Pistols' spiky hair was a startling sight during the mid-'70s 'poodle era'.

"Before the Bill Grundy show it was just music, the next day it was media." Steve Jones

time. The first time I saw Lydon I burst out laughing. I didn't get the job because I wouldn't cut my hair. Not that it was down to my arse or anything, just a kind of West Coast look."

What ultimately upset the Today viewers, of course, wasn't Steve Jones's tit-shirt but his exuberant use of the f-word. Wound up by Grundy's gauche attempts to chat up Siouxsie, and then goaded into ever more outrageous outbursts, the guitarist calls Grundy a "dirty sod", a "dirty old man", a "dirty bastard", and a "dirty fucker", before finishing him off with a phrase that curiously married the worlds of the Beano comic and the terraces at Stamford Bridge – a "fucking rotter". Even in 2002, I'd imagine such a profusion of expletives on, say, the Richard And Judy show would have most people transfixed in horror or delight. Back then it was like a nuclear bomb going off.

"It was hilarious," recalled Jones. "It was one of the best feelings, the next day, when you saw the paper. You thought, Fucking hell, this is great! From that day on it was different. Before then, it was just music, the next day, it was the media."

Interviewed in Jon Savage's England's Dreaming, photographer Ray Stevenson recalled a different reaction. "I went into the office the following day and they were all shell-shocked... Steve didn't get over the shock for some time."

The Thames Today show appearance resulted in the kind of exposure for the group it's impossible to buy. Three tabloid front covers (The Daily Mirror waded in with the famous "The Filth And The Fury!" headline) plus numerous column inches elsewhere. The idea of the Sex Pistols being a genuine menace to society was cemented in the public mind, yet their facility to shock the British nation was only beginning to be tested.

When Matlock quit the band in March 1977, fed up with Lydon's vituperative Johnny Rotten persona, his replacement Sid Vicious caricatured the violence and nihilism associated with punk. But it was the release of God Save The Queen in the year of EIIR's Jubilee celebrations which became a defining moment in British culture and the Pistols' greatest achievement.

In a world in which people's perceptions of the royals had yet to be shaken by Charles and Diana's divorce, the arrival of Sarah Ferguson and the Duke of Edinburgh's roll-call of near-racist comments, a rock single on a major label claiming the monarchy was a "fascist regime" and that its figurehead "ain't no human being" was political dynamite. Looking back, it's a miracle the Pistols got away with it.

Or perhaps they didn't. Retribution of sorts was meted out via the chart-compilers' decision to keep God Save The Queen off the Number 1 spot, and the violent attacks that Lydon, drummer Paul Cook and other Pistols associates suffered on the streets of the capital. After God Save The Queen, few UK promoters would risk booking the group, a situation which together with Sid's enormous drug habit eventually destroyed them.

So what made the Pistols so dangerous? And why does their music still knock that of subsequent "punk" arrivistes into a cocked hat? "The lyrics to God Save The Queen and Anarchy In The UK meant something, they weren't just done for shock value," explained John Lydon last year on Channel 4's Top 10 Banned Records. "They have a point and a purpose. I think it's too damn near the truth... and far too accurate for the establishment to tolerate."

In other words, unlike most "outrageous" rock acts since, they really did mean it, maaan.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

John Lydon
Lydon (far left) currently resides in LA with his partner Nora and her two children. After he left the Pistols in 1978, Lydon formed Public Image Ltd. Their debut 45, Public Image, made the Top 10 and their inaugural LP entered the Top 30. 1993 saw Lydon collaborate with Leftfield on their hit Open Up and three years later reform the Pistols in 1996 with their original line-up.

Steve Jones
After singing lead on the Sex Pistols' 1979 single Silly Thing, Steve (second right) got a taste for frontman success and formed The Professionals with fellow Pistol Paul Cook and Andy Allen. They recorded two albums under this guise, their eponymous debut and I Didn't See It Coming.

Glen Matlock
After being dumped by the Pistols in February 1977, Glen (second left) formed The Rich Kids. Since then he's written a book – I Was A Teenage Sex Pistol – collaborated with Ian Hunter, Johnny Thunders and Primal Scream, and released two solo albums.

Paul Cook
As drummer with The Professionals, Paul (far right) made a fairly successful career. He's recently drummed for both Edwyn Collins and Vic Godard.

Sid Vicious
Before going to trial on a charge of murdering his girlfriend Nancy Spungen in Manhatten's Chelsea Hotel, Sid died of a drug overdose in an apartment in Greenwich Village on 2 February, 1979.

PHOTOS: BOB GRUEN (STAR FILE), RELAY, BARRY PLUMMER

EYEWITNESS

1 January 1976
to 23 April 1976

In early 1976 something was stirring in London's pubs and clubs. While playing only their first handful of gigs, the **Sex Pistols** were waking people to the fact that a new musical movement was about to explode.

Evidence for the existence of punk rock was thin on the ground at the start of 1976. On the first day of the New Year, rock fans in London with £3.30 to spare would be hard-pressed to find a more exciting way of spending it than buying a ticket for The Great British Music Festival at Olympia. There they could see Procol Harum, John Miles, Barclay James Harvest, Baker Gurvitz Army and Snafu, accomplished musicians one and all, but lacking the vital spark that had first fired rock'n'roll. Even so, in tiny clubs, grimy pubs and front rooms across the UK, something more incendiary was stirring...

1 January 1976

In Manchester, TV producer Anthony Wilson is given a copy of Horses by Patti Smith. He will give the Sex Pistols their first TV exposure, before founding the influential Factory Records, home of Joy Division and New Order.

Anthony Wilson: In late 1975 nothing, absolutely nothing, was happening. We were in that great dead period that one gets at the end of a culture. The programme I was doing at Granada then, So It Goes, was regarded as a comedy show at first because there was nothing else to do but have a few laughs. My own particular introduction to the fact that the world might be changing was when a friend gave me a copy of Horses by Patti Smith on New Year's Day 1976.

Future Gen X-er Tony James ponders London SS's next move.

15 January 1976

The London SS has been rehearsing since mid-1975, with future members of The Clash, The Damned and Generation X in its fluctuating line-up. Today, following the recent departure of Brian James and Rat Scabies, Paul Simonon is auditioned as a possible replacement.

Tony James (Generation X): I had met Mick Jones at the Fulham Greyhound in about 1974. We were trying to form a group which was similar to the New York Dolls...

THE CAST LIST

Anthony Wilson
Wilson (right) presented Granada's alternative music show, So It Goes, and introduced emerging punk talent. Became a local celeb in Manchester where he helped launch the careers of Joy Division, and co-founded Factory Records in 1979.

Chris Spedding
Former axeman with Nucleus and other prog outfits, Spedding shopped at McLaren's boutique and produced the Sex Pistols' demo which earned them an EMI contract. They called it "shit", and never worked with him again.

Malcolm McLaren
The Svengali of punk was an *enfant terrible* on the mid-'60s art school scene where he began an association with the Parisian Situationist movement. The story of the Sex Pistols hinges on the personalities who converged on McLaren's boutique which he co-founded with Vivienne Westwood. A devotee of the British Museum, he stated: "I learnt all my politics and understanding of the world through the history of art."

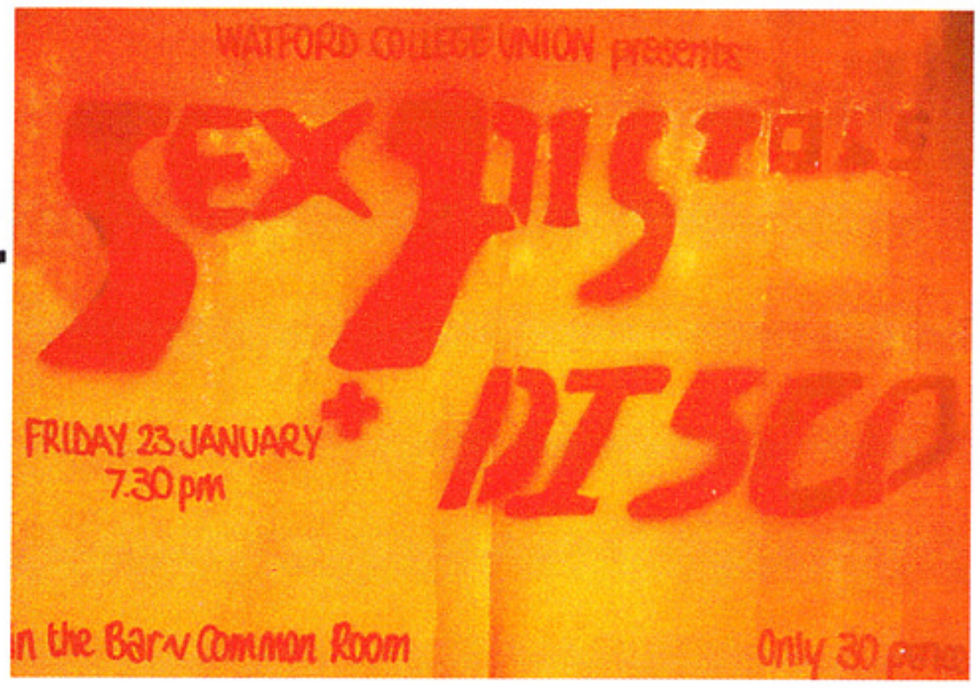
John Lydon
A regular weekender at Sex, Lydon's green hair and 'I hate Pink Floyd' T-shirt caught McLaren's attention while his green teeth earned him the moniker Johnny Rotten. He replaced Warwick Nightingale as vocalist with the fledgling Pistols after auditioning to the shop's jukebox, but departed in 1978 to form Public Image Ltd after the band's ill-fated US tour.

Joe Strummer
The son of a British diplomat, Strummer attended art school and busked before joining pub-rock outfit The 101'ers. After seeing the Pistols in '76, he formed The Clash with Mick Jones of the London SS. After Jones quit in '83, Joe strummed on for another three years, then quit to pursue a variety of projects including acting and film scoring. His latest band is The Mescaleros.

PHOTOS: PENNIE SMITH/GRANADA MEDIA

The cheek of it!: Johnny Rotten offers Jordan a helping hand.

EYEWITNESS



"With so many people on speed, there was always someone ready for violence."

Neil Spencer, journalist

According to CBGB's owner Hilly Kristal, unlike many punk bands he put on, Talking Heads (above) were "great right from the start". (Left) The 101'ers line-up (l-r), Joe Strummer, Clive Timperley, Richard Dudanski and Dan Kelleher.

Paul Simonon: When I went to this rehearsal, as soon as I got there, Mick said, "You can sing, can't you?" And they got me singing. But I couldn't get into it. They were into the New York Dolls and they all had very long hair, so it only lasted a couple of days.
Tony James: Mick and I decided to call it a day. It was back to the two of us after nine months of getting nowhere.

20 January 1976

An article about TV show Rock Follies in Time Out magazine includes the phrase: "It's the buzz, cock!" When it is noticed by Mancunians Howard Devoto and Pete Shelley, they decide that the 'Buzzcocks' would make a good name for a band.

23 January 1976

The Sex Pistols play at Watford College, England.

Malcolm McLaren (manager, Sex Pistols): I was trying to do with the Sex Pistols what I failed to do with the New York Dolls. I was taking the nuances of Richard Hell, the faggy pop side of the New York Dolls, the politics of boredom and mashing it all together to make a statement.
Paul Cook (drummer, Sex Pistols): I don't think people realise just how little was going on in the 1970s. There was nothing else for kids to do but go to concerts and football matches and hang around on the streets. That was what made us realise that we had to start our own thing.

The Stranglers play The Red Cow, London.

Jean-Jacques Burnel (bassist, The Stranglers): In 1976 we did something like 300 gigs and we were fighting every other night. We had to barricade ourselves in our dressing room in Glasgow, and got beaten up in North Wales.

Hugh Cornwell (guitar/vocals, The Stranglers): We weren't aware of being a part of punk; we were just pleased to be gigging. Initially, we couldn't get gigs because we weren't considered good enough musicians; after punk we were considered too good... but we had that aggression that comes from two years of doing gigs where the audience would throw bottles at us, attack us, or stage mass walk-outs. Nobody who booked us wanted us to play again.

Jean-Jacques Burnel: The punks who followed us knew we weren't the 'real thing' but the real thing was phonier. Mick Jones and the other guys used to come and see us when they had long hair.

Television and Talking Heads play at CBGB's, New York.

Hilly Kristal (owner, CBGB's): People talk a lot about whether punk started in New York City or in London. CBGB's had a scene going long before the London thing started to happen, but I've never claimed that I started punk. All I really did was encourage bands to do their own thing and that meant a lot of diversity. Television had been playing for me at CBGB's since 1974. When they started they were really awful... very poor musicians who hadn't found themselves yet. As time went by they got much better. Talking Heads didn't start at CBGB's until June 1975, but they were great right from the very start, better musicians, better image. Unlike the London punk thing, where you could see that all the bands shared a certain attitude and identity, all the bands who came out of CBGB's – like the Ramones, Blondie and Mink DeVille – were very different from each other.

In St Edward's Church, Crawley, Malice have their first rehearsal. They will eventually evolve into The Cure.

Robert Smith (The Cure): The liberation of punk for us was the sense that you didn't have to be orthodox. It all began with a sense of total release, but you can't maintain that.

12 February 1976

The Sex Pistols support Eddie And The Hot Rods at the Marquee, London.

John Lydon: Eddie And The Hot Rods were showcasing for a record company that night. They knew we had a reputation, and they wanted us there. Since we never had our own stage monitors, we had to rely on others for their equipment and, if they bugger you about, that's the end for you. If you can't hear what you're doing, you're fucked. "Sure you can use our monitors," they said. But when it came to the actual gig, somehow the monitors were turned off. I call that industrial sabotage or a major

mistake and didn't take kindly to it. That's when things started to go sadly wrong for Eddie And The Hot Rods. I put a mic stand through one of their monitors.

Vic Godard (Subway Sect): I was walking with Rob Simmons [Subway Sect guitarist] past the Marquee when we heard this noise. We went straight in and saw Johnny Rotten in the audience, throwing chairs about. We loved their image, but we weren't that mad on the actual music. But the performance was brilliant. We'd been doing rhythm'n'blues stuff and this blew that right out the window.

Neil Spencer (journalist): The first thing I noticed was that they looked completely unique. Big mohair sweaters and spiky hair – absolutely nobody looked like that. And people were shouting abuse at the band, but what was novel was that the band shouted right back. Musically, they were raw, exciting and charismatic. When I spoke to them afterwards they gave me that famous quote, "We're not into music, we're into chaos," which had obviously been primed by Malcolm, and they faithfully trotted it out.

13 February 1976

The 101'ers, featuring future Clash frontman Joe Strummer, play at the Town Hall, Hampstead, London.

John Peel (BBC Radio 1 DJ): Most of the original punks came from the pub-rock scene of bands like Eddie And The Hot Rods and The 101'ers. It changed everything more than any other youth movement.

DP Costello, later to be better-known as Elvis Costello, plays at the Half Moon, Putney, London, supporting Vivian Stanshall, former leader of the Bonzo Dog Doo-Dah Band.

Elvis Costello: I had a little group in London... In the evenings we'd try to play rock'n'roll, R&B numbers, some country songs – a real pub-rock mixture. It was the usual thing – trapped in mediocrity. So I went out on my own... solo.

14 February 1976

The Sex Pistols play in the Butler's Wharf studio of Malcolm McLaren's artist/socialite friend, Andrew Logan.

Jordan (Sex employee and former manager of Adam & The Ants): The Sex Pistols started playing, and nobody knew what had hit them. Andrew Logan was freaking out, actually, because it was like anarchy had been transported into his little paradise. And he hadn't realised what was going on there.

Someone from New Musical Express arrived, and Malcolm came rushing up to me and said, "The enemy is here! They've actually turned up. We've got to do something that will create a scuffle, a story." And I said, "Well, what?" And he said, "Well, why don't you go up there and take your clothes off?" I said, "Oh, come on, Malcolm." And he said, "No, I'm serious."

He was so excited, desperate to get some kind of scam going, but I was determined, and I told him I wouldn't do it. And he bugged me again, so I finally told him that if John pulls me onstage, if John takes my clothes off, I'll do it. But John wasn't really very, uh, brave. He liked things to be set up for him, but he wasn't great at instigating it, so Malcolm had a word with him, and in the middle of Iggy Pop's No Fun, John broke all the zips on my leotard, which was a real piss-off. I was so fed up about that, I just took the back off it and went zoom.

Blonde ambition: Debbie Harry described Blondie's CBGB's debut in 1976 (above) as "the next step up".

A new five-piece line-up of Blondie, now including Jimmy Destri on keyboards, debuts at CBGB's, New York.

Debbie Harry (Blondie): I think that debuting at CBGB's was clearly the starting point for us breaking out of the small, cocoon-like world of the New York club scene. The show was fun, we got a fantastic response and I felt good about all the work that we had done. It was clearly a great departure and the next step up for us. We were moving into a bigger world and starting to do things we had previously not even gotten near to, as far as presentation is concerned.

19 February 1976

Kilburn And The High Roads, featuring Ian Dury, play at Dingwalls, Camden Town, London.

BP Fallon (publicist): I had seen this geezer

PHOTOS: JULIA YEWDALL; GODLIS X 2

The booze brothers: Johnny Thunders And The Heartbreakers (l-r) Billy Rath, Walter Lure, Jerry Nolan and Johnny Thunders.

"There's this incredible antagonism coming from those older bands like Wings, Queen... we've even had rows with them."

Malcolm McLaren, 1976

hanging around at a lot of Kilburn gigs, he'd stand down the front just watching Ian. It turned out that this bloke was Johnny Rotten.

20 February 1976

When the Sex Pistols open for Screaming Lord Sutch at the College of Art, High Wycombe, they are seen by Pete Shelley and Howard Devoto.

Howard Devoto: My life changed the moment I saw the Sex Pistols. I immediately got caught up in trying to make things happen. Suddenly there was a direction, something I passionately wanted to be involved in. It was amazingly heady. I said to Malcolm, "Do you want to come and play at my college?" And he said, "If you can set it up, we'll do it."

4 March 1976

Malcolm McLaren rails against the rock establishment in today's edition of NME.

Malcolm McLaren: A lot of kids feel cheated. They feel the music's been taken away from them by that whole over-25 audience... There's this incredible antagonism coming from those older bands too, against the Sex Pistols – bands like Wings, Queen... we've had rows with them.

17 March 1976

Johnny Thunders And The Heartbreakers, with Richard Hell in the band, play CBGB's.

Bob Gruen (photographer): The New York scene was extremely severe. Richard Hell had started wearing ripped-up T-shirts... but the funniest thing he ever wore – that I saw anyway – was a T-shirt with a target painted in the middle that read 'Please Kill Me'.

18 March 1976

DP Costello plays at The Grail, Hounslow, UK.

Elvis Costello: Although I was working, I didn't have the money to go down The Roxy and see what the bands were doing – The Clash, the Pistols. I just read about them in Melody Maker and the NME the same as anyone else. I was Joe Public.

30 March 1976

When the Sex Pistols play the 100 Club in London for the first time, Chrissie Hynde and guitarist/producer Chris Spedding are among the audience of 50.

Chris Spedding: They looked and sounded

PHOTO: BOB GRUEN

good. Most groups are pretty boring; they weren't. I find it weird, all that about them not playing music. If they are notable for one thing, it's that. They were always in time and in tune.

Chrissie Hynde: I can remember Johnny Rotten singing No Fun. He was sitting on the floor and crying. There were always exciting things like that which made their show so great. And, while they were playing, he kept picking up his mic stand, over his shoulder, trying to spear Glen Matlock. There was always this tension that he was trying to do grievous bodily harm to Matlock onstage. And then there was a horrible fight onstage and Rotten left.

Chris Spedding: Rotten was either pushed or jumped off the stage in disgust and McLaren screamed at him that he wouldn't get his taxi fare home if he didn't get back onstage.

Chrissie Hynde: Steve Jones just couldn't handle it and he ripped his guitar strings off with one hand. So then Rotten finally came back in and, when he realised that Steve had ripped the strings off his guitar and couldn't play any more, Rotten leapt back onstage and went, "OK, what's next?" This is 15 minutes since he'd left. So it looked like it was Steve's fault they couldn't carry on. Rotten was horrible and would always make anybody else look bad if he possibly could.

Chris Spedding: Johnny Rotten was very upset and was saying that he wanted to leave the group. I told him not to, because I believed there was really something there.

1 April 1976

The Buzzcocks play their first gig, at the Bolton Institute of Technology, but the plugs are pulled after three numbers.

Howard Devoto: I was wearing these knee-length pink boots, striped jeans and a brown leather jacket. We started off and, immediately, Diamond Dogs was half the speed it was supposed to be and we got the plug pulled.

3 April 1976

The Sex Pistols play the Nashville Rooms, West London, supporting The 101'ers.

Joe Strummer (guitarist, 101'ers): While they were doing their soundcheck, I heard Malcolm saying to John, "Do you want the kind of shoes Steve's got, or the kind that Paul's got? What sort of sweater do you want?" And I thought, "Blimey, they've got a manager, and he's offering them clothes."

Clive Timperley (guitarist, 101'ers): It was the first really important gig they did, and we had a ready-made audience who came to see us. People were all extremes in their reaction to them – from appalled to very interested. A lot of the heckling was put-up. It was very much a manipulative situation.

Joe Strummer: They played Steppin' Stone, which we also did, but they were light years ahead of us. The difference between us and them was, when we played Route 66 to the drunks at the bar, we were going, "Please like us." But here was this quartet who were standing there going, "We don't give a toss what you think, you pricks, this is what we like to play and this is the way we're gonna play it."

TIME CAPSULE

As punk was hatching, Brucie's Generation Game topped the TV ratings, De Niro prowled the New York streets in Taxi Driver, and the first Body Shop opened. Meanwhile...

12 January
Queen of crime, Agatha Christie, dies, aged 86.

21 January
New supersonic airliner Concorde begins its first commercial flights.

16 March
Pipe-sucking PM Harold Wilson resigns.

19 March
Princess Margaret and Lord Snowdon separate after 15 years of marriage.

27 March
Brotherhood Of Man begin a six-week stay at Number One with Eurovision smash Save Your Kisses For Me.

Geoff Hutt (journalist, NME): They try nothing flash, but play hard and sharp within limitations, which acts as a discipline.

Joe Strummer: As soon as I saw them, I just knew. It was something you just knew without bothering to think about.

4 April 1976

The Sex Pistols play at El Paradise, Soho, London.

Glen Matlock: It was a really disgusting strip joint. Malcolm arranged the gig with the owners, some sort of Maltese gangster types. We had to take the seats out, and get buckets of disinfectant and swab the place out. It was all crusty, from punters shooting their wads.

Steve Jones: There were strippers actually working before we went on, and then after we finished, they started stripping again.

John Lydon: We had about 10 people inside watching us gig. I burned myself really bad. I stumbled and fell on the lights that were normally anchored above but were on the ground. I couldn't see what I was doing, and I stumbled and hit them on my side. I still have a huge welt on my side from it.

John Ingham (journalist, Sounds): The group looked funny and I found myself laughing a lot. John was really trying to be Johnny Rotten and it was like a comic book. It wasn't the madman you saw nine months later at all. He was going, "You'd better like what I'm doing otherwise I'm wasting my time." All the songs sounded similar but they were clearly different. Some songs were clearly good and the others were over quickly.

10 April 1976

Melody Maker reviews a Pistols gig with the words, "I hope we shall hear no more of them."

23 April 1976

The 101'ers (including future Clash vocalist Joe Strummer) play the Nashville Rooms, West London, supported by the Sex Pistols.

Neil Spencer (journalist, NME): There were so many people on speed around that time, so there was always somebody ready for violence at those gigs.

Neil Tennant (later of the Pet Shop Boys, in a letter to NME): As you know, the Sex Pistols are composed of three nice, clean, middle-class art students and a real live dementoid, Johnny Rotten. Now, on Friday night, El Dementoid wasn't really on top form, although the rest of the band were doing their best to compensate. Johnny's heart wasn't in the music. His lack of interest was naturally reflected by the audience who, disappointed, weren't reacting sufficiently to the band. So how do the Pistols create their atmosphere when their music has failed? By beating up a member of the audience. How else?

John Lydon: There was supposedly a fight at the Nashville Rooms gig, this big symbol of early punk rock violence. It was really just a load of people falling all over the place. Vivienne [Westwood] smacked some girl. It was nonsense really – fisticuffs and handbags.

Neil Spencer: There were also a couple of guys at the front having a go at the band, and Steve finally just had enough of it and walloped one of them. Then Malcolm jumped in, presumably to help Vivienne.

John Ingham: John, with this look of glee, immediately dived off the front of the stage and started throwing punches. Steve came forward and started trying to pull them apart. It was complete chaos. Vivienne said afterwards that she was bored, the Sex Pistols were boring, she decided to liven things up. So she slapped this girl for no reason, just did it.

23 April 1976

The Ramones release their eponymous debut album.

Mark Perry (founder of Sniffin' Glue/ member of Alternative TV): The first I really heard about the punk rock movement was by reading about the New York scene, especially in NME through Nick Kent, hearing about CBGB's and the Ramones. It all sounded very exciting, talking about things in a new way... Then the Ramones album came out, their first album, and it was on import. Nick Kent reviewed it and it sounded interesting. I went and bought the import copy before it came out in Britain. I was just blown away. It was was such an exciting album. They definitely had the edge over Dr Feelgood for me. This was something special, their whole attitude.

John Peel: I used to go to a branch of Virgin Records on Marylebone High Street, run by a guy who would lend me records on approval, and one of them was the first record by the Ramones. The way they looked and the fact there were 20 tracks on it intrigued me. I'd never heard anything as abrupt or confrontational since Little Richard, and wasn't sure if I should play it just because it was so scary and mad. It transformed that evening's show.

Class of '77

THE DAMNED

They kick-started a musical revolution with the first punk 45. But it wasn't just good timing finds Chris Hunt, The Damned could actually play their instruments too.

THE FILE

Personnel: Dave Vanian (vocals), Brian James (guitar), Captain Sensible (bass), Rat Scabies (drums).
From: London
Formed: 1976
The gameplan: To make loud, fast, chaotic music and to take absolutely nothing seriously!
First gig: 6 July 1976, supporting the Sex Pistols at the 100 Club.
First record: New Rose, November 1976.
Biggest UK hit: Eloise (number 3), January 1986.

The Damned were the first. Dave Vanian's ironic, sneering nod snatched straight from teen angst pop – "Is she really going out with him?" – and punk was off the blocks with a new kind of love song. And what a glorious noise. Anchored by breakneck pounding drums and a guitar riff that sliced straight through the backbone of the song, New Rose was a derisory, non-conformist racket that hit home harder than a ball-end hammer. "If there is such a thing as a punk sound, then that's it," insists Captain Sensible today. "It's snotty and loud and fast, it's gnarled and it's got passion."

A matter of weeks later the Pistols introduced us to their brilliant but far more conventional punk rock stylings via Anarchy In The UK, but The Damned had already set the template for what history would judge – for better or for worse – as the true sound of punk. Fast and frantic, loud and snarled, New Rose was the rough-hewn pattern for punk.

"We simply wanted to play as fast and loud as possible." Captain Sensible

Releasing the first single of what soon became a revolution ensured the name of The Damned was scrawled large in rock's book of remembrance, but it wasn't just a matter of timing. Guitarist Brian James knew exactly what he was doing when he pulled this disparate crowd of misfits and street yobs together to form a band – he wanted to make 'chaos music'. And while the Pistols were recording the powerful but pedestrian-paced Anarchy, The Damned had already put their very own chaos theory into practice. For Brian James it was all about speed. Never mind the bollocks, put the pedal to the metal!

As the two acts lined up to co-headline the Anarchy In The UK tour in December 1976 (The Damned would ultimately leave after just one gig), the difference in musical styles was so monumental that Captain Sensible even felt they could not really be considered competitors. "We had a guitar speed thing going on," he explains. "I saw the Pistols play and thought that they had a shambolic charm, but – and I'm probably doing us down on the old punk credibility scale – we could actually play our instruments. We simply wanted to play as fast and as loud and as chaotically as possible. I didn't see the Pistols as being remotely in that genre."

Drawing on his love for the New York punk scene, when he built The Damned, Brian James made sure his bandmates understood his passion for a kind of furious, frantic music that you couldn't find on the radio. "Mainstream pop was going in one direction and we were just a little group of people going in a totally different direction," recalls the Captain of those early days. "Brian would constantly play us the MC5, the New York Dolls and The Stooges to get it through to us where he was coming from. The stuff that was on the radio in Britain at the time was fucking diabolical and Brian washed our ears out with this stuff – he changed my whole perception of music."

The Damned might have been the first punk band to release a single and to appear on the telly, but they were also the first punk band to split up. The chaos of The Damned's touring lifestyle had taken its toll on the band through 1977, but ultimately it was Brian James who pulled the plug. His determination to keep sole ownership of the musical direction meant not just frustration for budding songwriter Sensible, but also that the rushed second album, Music For Pleasure, did not have the wealth of quality material that had graced Damned Damned Damned earlier the same year. At the beginning of 1978 – as many of their contemporaries were just starting to get into their stride – James called a meeting and announced that he was forming a new group and The Damned were no more. His bandmates were devastated. "I was really enjoying being in The Damned," says the Captain. "One minute I was a toilet cleaner, the next minute I'm in a band – and for some reason birds find someone with a guitar slung around their neck more attractive than toilet cleaners."

In the end though, after just six months apart, Vanian, Scabies and Sensible realised there could be a life after James and became the first punk band to reform. Despite having lost their prime songwriter, the previously frustrated Sensible was vindicated when he supplied many of the tunes for what now stands as the band's best album, Machine Gun Etiquette. Love Song, Smash It Up and I Just Can't Be Happy Today proved The Damned were more than capable of surviving without James.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

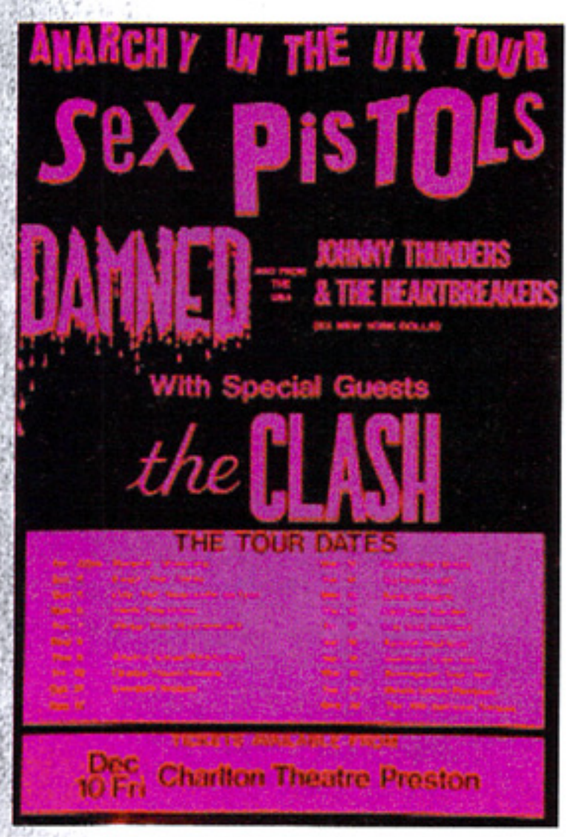
Dave Vanian
A stable presence in The Damned's oft-changing line-up, Vanian (far left) has time to maintain another career fronting the Phantom Chords, while still touring in the current incarnation of The Damned. After last year signing to Nitro Records – the label run by big fan Brian 'Dexter' Holland of The Offspring – The Damned released Grave Disorder, their first studio LP since the '80s.

Brian James
With the biggest part of his career dedicated to Lords Of The New Church, which he formed with former Dead Boy Stiv Bators after leaving The Damned, James (far right) has most recently been working with ex-MC5 guitarist Wayne Kramer in Mad For The Racket, with among others Stewart Copeland, Clem Burke and Duff McKagen of Guns N'Roses.

Captain Sensible
The Captain (second left) scored a huge hit with the chart-topping Happy Talk in 1982, and a clutch of successful follow-up solo singles eased him out of The Damned, although he has been in and out of various line-ups of the band ever since. Having maintaining an intermittent but occasionally inspired solo career, he and Vanian are the only original members in the current Damned line-up.

Rat Scabies
For many years a constant with Vanian in The Damned, Rat (second right) played his last gig with the band in 1995. His most recent musical project has been Slipper, a high concept band who make soundtracks for films which have never been made.

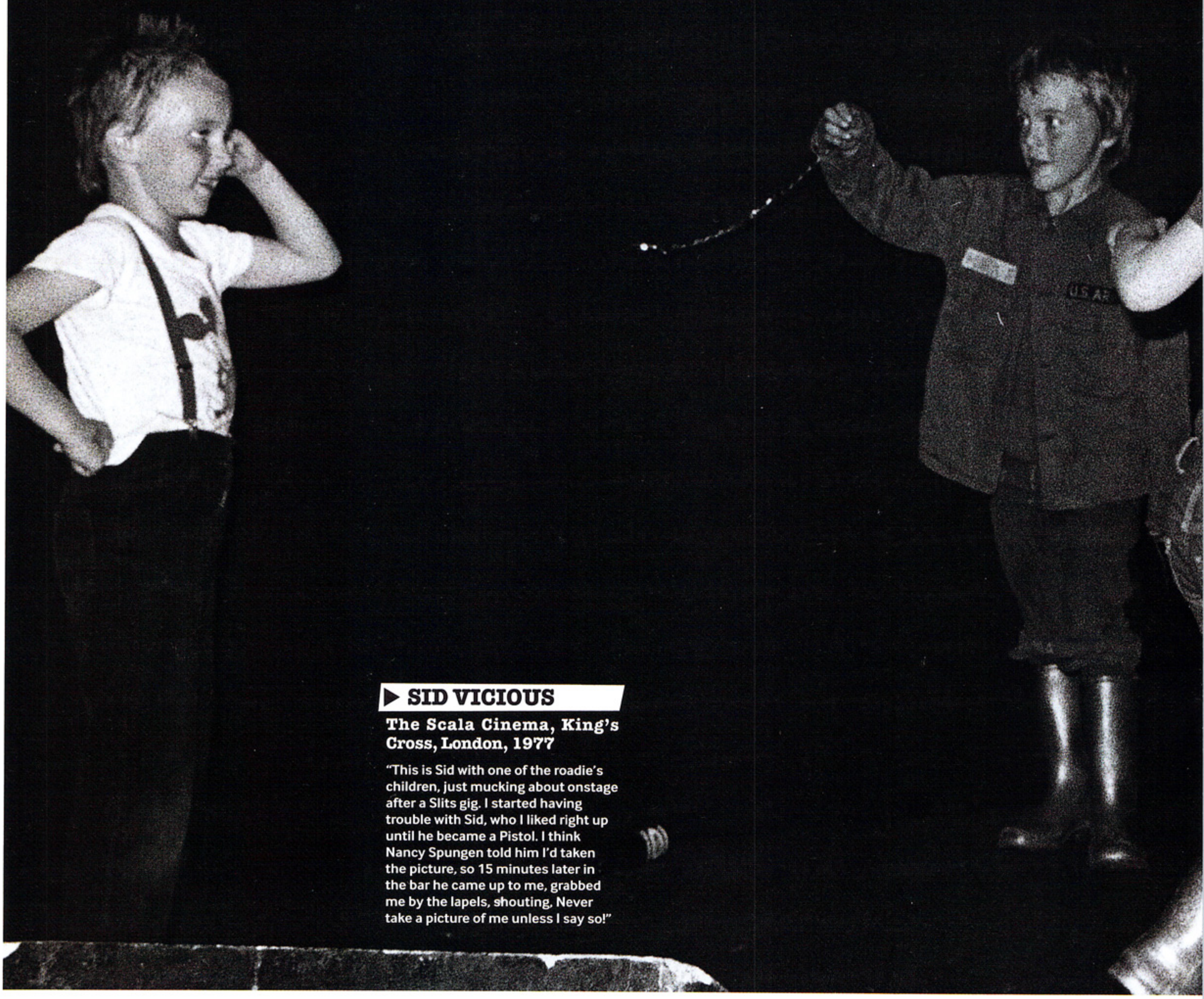
PHOTOS: IAN DICKSON/REDFERNS



Lords of the old church: The Damned in panto mode back in March 1977.

PISTOL SHOTS

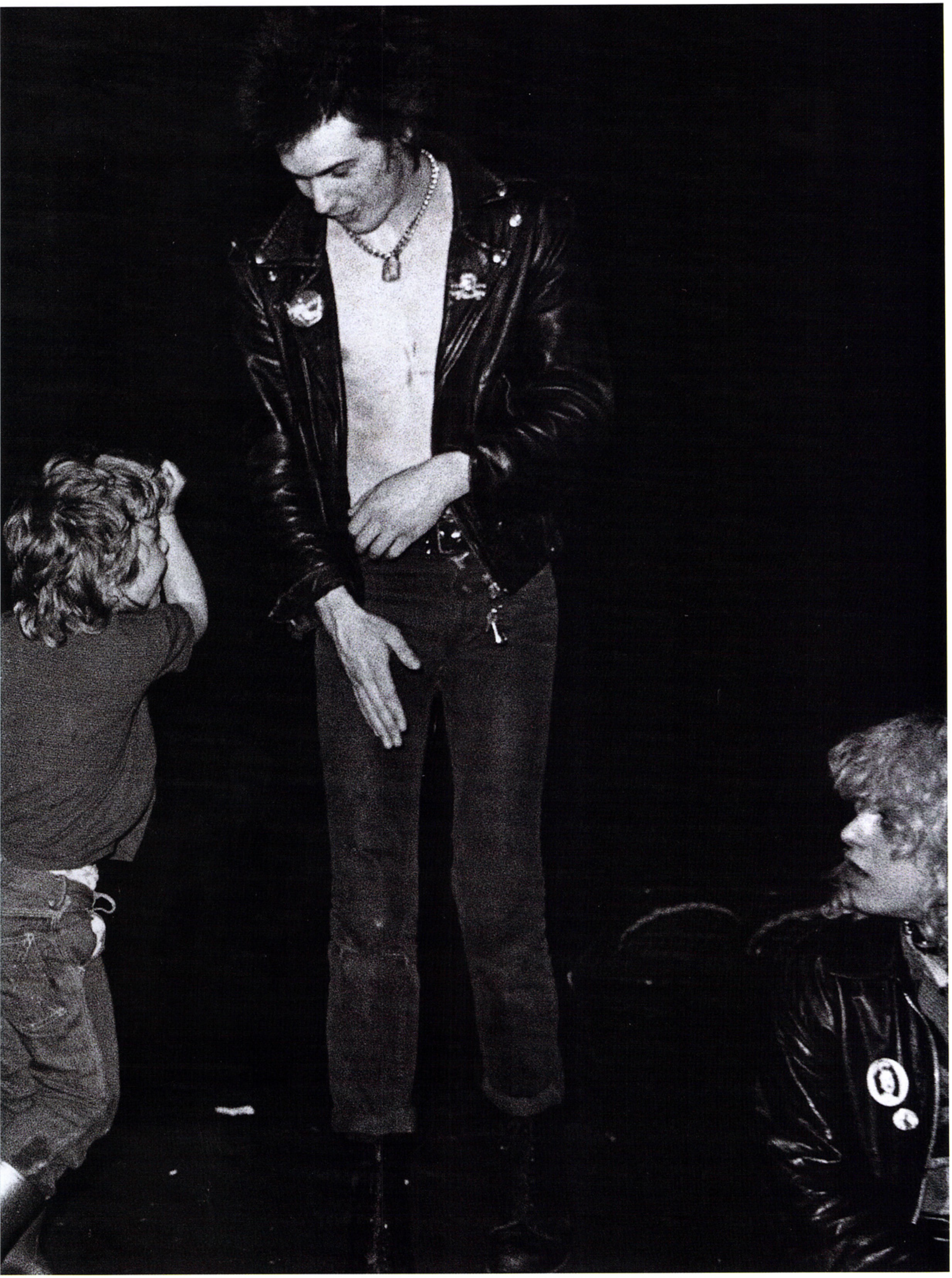
For a short while, Ray Stevenson was the only photographer in the court of punk. He tells Paul Stokes how he got in and how he got kicked out.



▶ SID VICIOUS

The Scala Cinema, King's Cross, London, 1977

"This is Sid with one of the roadie's children, just mucking about onstage after a Slits gig. I started having trouble with Sid, who I liked right up until he became a Pistol. I think Nancy Spungen told him I'd taken the picture, so 15 minutes later in the bar he came up to me, grabbed me by the lapels, shouting, Never take a picture of me unless I say so!"



Photographer Ray Stevenson's installation at the heart of punk was somewhat effortless and unopposed. This was due to his brother Nils who was an initial co-manager of the Sex Pistols. "For about 18 months, I was really the only photographer on the punk scene," he explains. "Once you were in the Pistols' camp you were considered to be royalty so all the bands who looked up to them would try and get you to photograph them as well. Also, not a lot of people wanted to photograph the Pistols. They were probably scared of getting beaten up."

Indeed, mirroring Gered Mankowitz's status with The Rolling Stones a decade before, Stevenson soon had established himself as the Sex Pistols' court photographer, capturing some of the most candid, revealing and exciting shots of the band that ignited punk.

"My brother Nils, who had a failing clothes business, fancied Vivienne Westwood – hard to believe now – but he never got anywhere other than going drinking with her and Malcolm McLaren," explains Stevenson. "Malcolm starting to go on about this band, and we just got sucked into it. I was the only one who knew about music, so Malcolm got me into it, and, of course, we all worked for free which is such an important thing for Malcolm."

Despite the lack of financial reward, it was a remarkable turnaround for Stevenson who'd all but quit photography at the end of the '60s having worked with a fledgling David Bowie and Marc Bolan. Indeed, Stevenson gave up after he shattered his hip in a car crash driving back from Bowie's house. However punk lured him behind the lens once more.

"I'd been working at the BBC and I was given a choice," he explains. "I could have stayed with the BBC and learnt about making video or I could become a punk photographer and have fun. I still don't know if I made the right choice."

Propelled into the Pistols' inner circle, Stevenson enjoyed unique access to the band. "When I shot them I made a point of showing them the photos, particularly Rotten who would study them," he explains. "I'm sure that helped him learn to pose. He knew what look worked and what didn't, and I think doing that gave me credibility and respect with the band."

They certainly kept Stevenson busy, generating over 1000 rolls of film during the punk era. "It was always different with the Pistols – different looks, different clothes," he remembers. And it was all unpaid for by the band, though fortunately, the odd reimbursement did present itself.

"Straight after the Today Programme [where the Pistols drunkenly abused host, Bill Grundy in 1976] I was called by The Daily Mail asking for pictures. So I made up a package and just walked down Fleet Street selling pictures," he recalls. "The next day I went into the office and found them all looking at the front pages a bit shell-shocked. So I told them about Hendrix after he took the piss on the Lulu Show by playing a Cream song. Chas Chandler ran up to him afterwards and said, That's great! You've got it made – the mums will hate you now. That suddenly changed the whole mood."

Unfortunately, Stevenson eventually found himself on the band's infamous enemy list, shortly after his brother departed to manage Siouxsie And The Banshees, by photographing Boys Clothing for Time Out magazine, both of which were already on the list.

A couple of days later Malcolm McLaren confirmed Stevenson's expulsion from the Pistols' inner sanctum. "He rang me up and told me not to come to one of the band's Screen On The Green gigs. When I asked him why not, he told me it was none of my business."

After shooting the Banshees for his brother, Stevenson eventually lost interest in music photography, briefly rekindling his work in 1986 for his beloved Sigue Sigue Sputnik.

"I haven't shot anything since then, because there isn't anyone I want to shoot," explains Stevenson, who's been travelling since. "I just don't believe in it any more. And if my pictures were good it was because I felt a passion for the people I was shooting."

▲ GAYE ADVERT

Irish tour, 1978

"That's me and Gaye Advert back at the hotel in Coleraine. This was my favourite tour. It was all scheduled – Coleraine, Belfast, Dublin and Cork. Then The Adverts were offered to do Top Of The Pops on the same night as the Coleraine gig. So their manager hired this two-propeller plane so they could do the gig after the TV show, only the pilot got lost in fog. He held the joystick in his legs and the map in his hands saying, It must be round here somewhere! It wasn't. We eventually got to Coleraine University just as everyone was leaving."

▲ POLY STYRENE

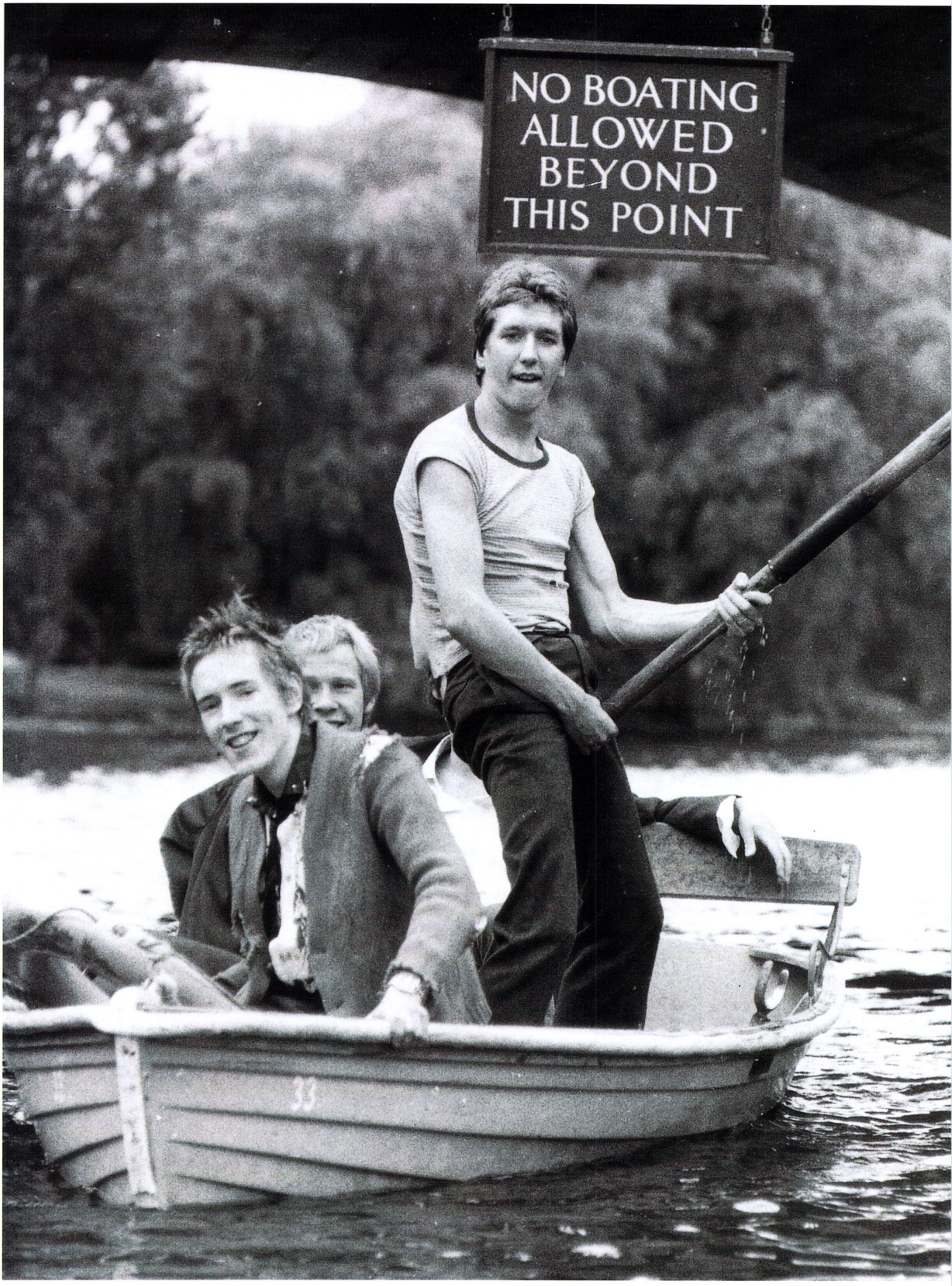
Mersey ferry, 28 August 1977

"Alan Yentob was standing behind me filming an Arena programme on X-Ray Spex when I took this shot. He was just some beardy bloke doing his job. I didn't realise at the time just how good he was. The band had just played Eric's in Liverpool. Poly was really sweet, but I just wish she had a better voice."

▶ JOHNNY ROTTEN

Paris, Chalet Du Lac, 4 September 1976

"The Sex Pistols had been invited over to Paris to open a disco club called Chalet Du Lac. It was remarkable, the club paid all our expenses but they really didn't know what they were booking. The beret belonged to Steve Jones, he always wore some token thing of the country he was visiting."


NO BOATING
ALLOWED
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"Not a lot of people wanted to photograph the Pistols. They were probably scared of getting beaten up."

THE DAMNED

The Rainbow, London 1977

"There's not much to say about them, really. I think I would have just turned up to take some pictures as I never needed to pay to get in anywhere. The Pistols camp thought all the other punk bands were terrible. They didn't understand the point of them. They didn't consider them quite bandwagon-jumpers, but not far off. Which is surprising for The Damned as Dave Vanian was a mate of Jordan's [worker in the Sex boutique] so he was well in on the Vivienne/Malcolm end of things."

THE SLITS

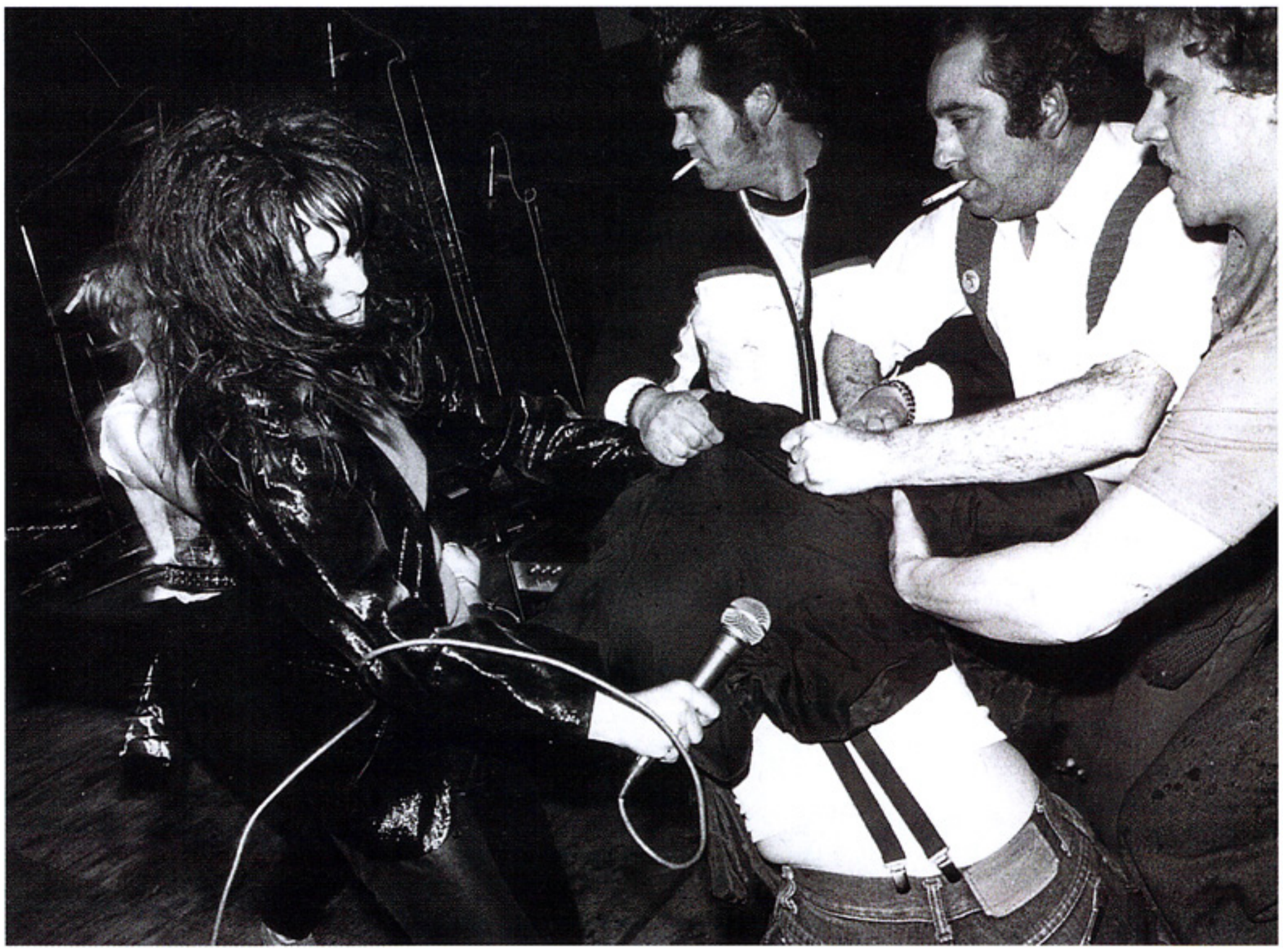
Woolwich, 1977

"This kid just jumped onstage while The Slits were playing. It was at a gig in Woolwich and I've also got a photo on the same roll with a sign saying 'Skate this way round', so I'm not sure what the venue was used for. I loved The Slits, they were great. Live, all their tracks sounded like great singles. I loved everything about them – their abuses of fashion, their attitude. I didn't shoot nearly enough of them, though."

SEX PISTOLS

The Serpentine, London, summer 1976

"This was Malcolm's idea. It was just a walk around London to shoot the band because up till then all we had was live stuff. We met at Glitterbest, walked through Berwick Street market, Carnaby Street, did a shot in a phone box by The Serpentine, then the boats. Afterwards Malcolm said lets have tea at Fortnum & Masons. Good idea I had the camera ready, but Rotten assessed the place and declared it a sick joke and just left."



Class of '77

THE STRANGLERS

In a musical scene where youth was a key element, the somewhat "mature" Stranglers stuck out like a sore thumb. Not that they cared. By Ian Harrison.

THE FILE

Personnel: Hugh Cornwell (vocals, guitar), Jean-Jacques Burnel (bass), Dave Greenfield (keyboards) and Jet Black (drums).
Hometown: London/France
Formed: 1974
The gameplan: To be successful.
First gig: Lost to time.
First record: (Get A) Grip (On Yourself), January 1977.
Biggest UK hit: Golden Brown (Number 2), February 1982.

Rock symbiosis is a wonderful thing. Factory Records spent the money earned by New Order to bring us the Happy Mondays. Without the bankability of The Smiths, the entirety of Rough Trade Records' '80s output would have been impossible. The Stranglers, however, were part of a record label trade-off that was more wonderful still.

"It was funny to be on a record label where the cash cow – if you'll pardon the expression – was Shirley Bassey," says ex-frontman Hugh Cornwell. "Because her success funded United Artists' investment in The Stranglers and Dr Feelgood, I always thought of her as the grandmother of punk."

"The cash cow for our label was Shirley Bassey. I've always thought of her as the grandmother of punk." Hugh Cornwell

Like Dr Feelgood, The Stranglers had been going for years before punk broke. Formed in 1974 as Wanderlust and later as The Guildford Stranglers, one-time biochemist, Cornwell was already a veteran. He'd played in Johnny Sox in Sweden with drummer Jet Black, who ran a fleet of ice-cream vans and owned an off-licence in Guildford. Classically trained guitarist and karate enthusiast Jean-Jacques Burnel joined them the same year. In July 1975, Dave Greenfield answered an ad in the Melody Maker to become their keyboardist. They gigged constantly – transporting their gear in Black's ice-cream van – and secured residencies at perennial London punk venues the Nashville and Hope & Anchor. They even played the Purley branch of the Young Conservatives association – and in 1976 supported Patti Smith on her tour of Britain. Their mixture of angry rock'n'roll with a side order of rough psychedelia won them a contract with United Artists in the December of that year.

Their feeling was that punk had come around to them rather than them seeking out punk. "We knew we were going to use it," says Cornwell, "because we were playing all the time and no one was getting it, we were playing in a very frustrated way, and our managers saw that aggressive music was happening. So it *was* stage-managed to an extent, but it wasn't invented."

A top live draw with a fiercely loyal fan base, there were nonetheless many incongruities about The Stranglers. Black was obviously pretty old (he had played in jazz groups in the '50s). They played atypically melodic pop songs which possessed aggression and intellect in equal measure, giving them more common ground with the future new wave acts than Eater or The Drones. They also had the ruthless work ethic of a band bent on success. But perhaps most threatening to punk orthodoxy, Dave Greenfield had long hair – *and a moustache*.

"Very un-punk," agrees Cornwell. "And publicly, there was a lot of staged antagonism between bands because the rules of punk identity were strict. But privately it was a very matey, very active social scene. Paul Cook and Steve Jones came to see us a lot, and Paul would ask Jet how he did certain things on his drums. It was a very creative, enjoyable, exciting time."

It was an eventful year for the group in 1977. In July, Burnel was nearly drafted for National Service in France, and later he and Black were arrested after a show at the Brighton Top Rank. They released two Top 5 albums in 1977, and scored a Number 8 hit with their second single Peaches.

"Pete Waterman has said that he thinks there were two great pop bands made in Britain," says Cornwell. "One was The Beatles and the other was The Stranglers. Which is a lovely thing for him to say, and in a way I can see why – we were writing classic pop tunes, with an aggressive edge, which were hits."

Peaches – with its telling line, "Oh shit! There goes the charabanc" – nowadays sounds like a fairly innocuous piece of British seaside postcard smut. For years, though, this was seen as proof of a dark and malevolent misogyny. Cornwell argues that this, and the group's violent reputation, was never true. "It was very tongue-in-cheek," he says. "With Peaches, I think people are now able to take it in the way it was intended, which was as a laugh, and an observation of certain male behaviour. And, we'd been working very hard for three or four years, getting nowhere. If you've got a song and you're getting loads of press and notoriety and people are talking about it – well, any attention was lovely."

When 1978 came around, leaving many bewildered punk refugees, The Stranglers were not among them. Age and wisdom saw them far outlive their contemporaries, and thereafter the original line-up maintained a consistently successful career until 1990, without ever forgetting what made them good. "Unfortunately, we never did get to meet Shirley Bassey," concludes Cornwell. "But we inherited her producer, Martin Rushent. He said she was very nice."

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Hugh Cornwell
Cornwell (pictured second from right) recorded a total of 11 LPs with The Stranglers before quitting the day after a concert at the Alexandra Palace on 11 August 1990. He continues to record and tour.

Jean-Jacques Burnel
After Cornwell's departure in 1990, Burnel (second from left) continued to play bass with The Stranglers, who were then joined by Paul Rogers (vocals) and John Ellis (guitar, replaced in 2000 by Baz Warne). The group have since recorded four LPs. Recently he played the JJ Burnel – Songs & Stories: Alone And Acoustic tour of the UK. In 1994, Burnel became a third Dan Shidokan Karate Black Belt and a fully qualified instructor at his own karate school in Huntington.

Dave Greenfield
Greenfield (far right) continues to play keyboards with The Stranglers. He is a member of the Regia Anglorum, who re-enact Anglo-Saxon battles.

Jet Black
Jet (far left) still drums for The Stranglers. He is reputed to live in a converted railway station in Gloucestershire, where he has a carpentry workshop where he makes wooden furniture.

PHOTOS: RETNA/PICTORIAL PRESS

the stranglers

EYEWITNESS

4 May 1976 to 17 September 1976

By summer 1976, things were hotting up as the key bands began building their live reputations and making demos. Meanwhile, other punk fans began putting groups together inspired by the Pistols and The Clash...

On the first day of May 1976, rock's old order still held sway. The Eagles were introducing US audiences to their new guitarist Joe Walsh and Led Zeppelin's album, Presence, topped the American charts. But in London, for those with eyes to see, there were clear indications that the cool of spring would soon transform itself into the long hot summer of punk.

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4 May 1976

Pete Shelley and Howard Devoto of the Buzzcocks place an ad in the New Manchester Review seeking a drummer.

8 May 1976

The Jam play at The Hope & Anchor, London.

Rick Buckler (drummer, The Jam): We'd been playing together for five years in pubs and working men's clubs. By the time we started doing London gigs, our image and style were already set but, although we looked nothing like punks, we were adopted by them as part of that movement.

Paul Weller: The really important thing about punk for us was that it connected us into a contemporary scene for the first time. Before that, we didn't play to people of our own age.

Rick Buckler: We were certainly aggressive enough. We used to fight a bit. Bruce would turn up sometimes wearing dark glasses because he'd been given a shiner by Paul.

Bruce Foxton (bassist, The Jam): I remember one argument, it came to blows between me and Paul, with me getting a black eye. I thought, "That's got to be the end of the band." John [Weller, The Jam manager] was freaking. I can't remember what it was over. It could have been anything – like loading the gear in or something.

11 May 1976

The Sex Pistols begin a Tuesday residency at the 100 Club, London.

Paul Cook (drummer, Sex Pistols): The gigs at

THE CAST LIST

PHOTO: KATE SIMON

Joey Ramone
Vocalist with the New York punk outfit who debuted at the legendary CBGB's club in 1974 and disbanded in 1996. Born Jeffrey Hyman in 1952, Joey died from lymphoma in 2001. He "had no voice, no looks, no chest, butt or knees. But he kicked a generation in the ass, hard."

Ian Dury
A former art teacher, Dury (right) began singing with Kilburn And The High Roads, who evolved into the Blockheads and signed to Stiff Records in 1975. The band notched up three Top 10 hits before Dury embarked on a successful acting career. After a four-year battle with cancer, he died in 2000.

Roger Armstrong
After an unsuccessful attempt to launch the career of The Chieftains, Armstrong relocated to London. He began working with Ted Carroll selling second-hand records from a market stall in Soho from which the Chiswick label emerged.

Peter Hook
Formed Joy Division with Bernard Albrecht after witnessing the Sex Pistols at Manchester's Free Trade Hall in 1976. Hook, whose ominous bass lines superbly complemented Ian Curtis' sombre lyrics, formed New Order after the latter's suicide in 1980, and pursued a techno/rock sideline, Revenge.

Nick Kent
Dubbed "the Judy Garland of rock journalism" by Lou Reed in 1976, Kent played with The Subterraneans, hung out with various rock luminaries and sent his regular dispatches from the front line to NME, Melody Maker, The Face and The Guardian.

Dressed to thrill: The Clash enjoy a catalogue moment – (from left) Paul Simonon, Joe Strummer and Mick Jones.

EYEWITNESS

The Ramones: unashamed fans of "bubblegum" pop.

the 100 Club were good because they were regular. As a result, other bands would start up because it was a place for punk bands. I suppose that's what started the punk movement.

Steve Severin (Siouxsie And The Banshees): All through 1976, the whole thing was based around 30 people going to see the Sex Pistols at the 100 Club, and I'd know 29 of them.

15 May 1976

The Sex Pistols attend a party with their devoted followers, known as the Bromley Contingent.

Berlin (Bromley Contingent): Sulphate – that's what got the Sex Pistols going. I had a party for them... and there was amphetamine sulphate everywhere.

John Lydon: I loved the stuff. I'm normally a very slow person and it made me more intense. I'm naturally paranoid and it made me feel better.

Berlin: The party was a complete and utter riot. Siouxsie was dressed in a plastic apron and tights, that was all. No knickers, nothing. And she had a leather whip. My parents had these awful polystyrene tiles, and there were whip marks all over the ceiling. Everybody was screwing. The stains on the sheets – honestly!

18 May 1976

The Sex Pistols play at the 100 Club, London.

Tom Robinson: They didn't bother to tune up, and Rotten's first words were, "Who's gonna buy me a drink then?" The next few minutes completely overturned everything I'd ever understood about entertainment values in the music business. They shambled on, playing diabolical versions of oldies like The Small Faces' Whatcha Gonna Do About It?. It was totally anti-showbiz and anti-musical, very negative and with overtones of violence. After about 15 minutes, I couldn't take it any longer and I had to leave. It changed my life. I knew something was going on that I had to get to grips with.

The 101'ers sign a recording contract with the independent Chiswick Records, founded by record stall owners Ted Carroll and Roger Armstrong.

Roger Armstrong: Before punk, there was this whole thing with The Count Bishops, The 101'ers, The Gorillas. That scene was the bridge between pub rock and punk. When punk came along, it was great for us, because it was all about making records cheaply.

21 May 1976

Doctors Of Madness play at The Crypt, Town Hall, Middlesbrough, supported by the Sex Pistols.

Pauline Murray (fan and Penetration singer): They wiped the Doctors Of Madness out. They wiped a lot of bands out. It sounds a cliché now, but I saw it happen. All those bands lost their confidence when the Sex Pistols came along.

27 May 1976

The Rolling Stones play at Earl's Court, London.

Nick Kent (journalist): All the future hierarchy were gathered in their Sunday best to get in, and were unable to. Brian James and Chrissie [Hynde] pointed Sid [Vicious] out to me. He was obviously wearing his father's old clothes – he had the bog-brush hair and he looked really lairy.

31 May 1976

The 101'ers, featuring future Clash leader Joe Strummer, release their debut single, Keys To Your Heart. On the same day, however, Strummer throws in his lot with The Heartdrops, later to become The Clash.

4 June 1976

The first US punk compilation, Live At CBGB's, is recorded over this weekend in New York, featuring Blondie, Laughing Dogs, Manster, Talking Heads, Mink DeVille and Tuff Darts. In England the Sex Pistols support the Buzzcocks at the Lesser Free Trade Hall, Manchester.

Tony Wilson (presenter, So It Goes, Granada TV): I didn't know what the fuck was going on until they played Steppin' Stone. Then it was clear that they were deeply and fabulously exciting, but this was so early in their development that Steve Jones was still windmilling his arms around in imitation of Pete Townshend. I went back to Granada and told my producer, Chris Pye, that we absolutely had to have them on the show.

Peter Hook (bassist, New Order): It was absolutely bizarre, the most shocking thing I have ever seen in my life. They looked like they were having such a fantastic time. Literally, the next day I went and bought a bass guitar for £35.

Mark E Smith (The Fall): They were alright, but I remember thinking, "We can do better than that."

15 June 1976

The Sex Pistols record demos at Majestic Studios, Clapham, London, with Chris Spedding, followed by a gig at the 100 Club.

John Lydon: If it had been left to me, the music would have been a huge wall of spite and ugliness. And if it had been left to any of them it would have been equally vile.

Chris Spedding: Every group is ashamed of their first foray into the studio and they always blame the poor old producer. The next thing I knew after we did those sessions was the whole group coming round my house with the first Ramones album. And they said, "We think it's a load of shit what you've done – listen to *this*." So they put it on and I just laughed. And I said, "Just turn that fucking shit off. You're 10 times better than that." And they actually had to agree with me when I played their demos. And off they went. And that was the last I heard from them.

John Lydon: Sid and [Jah] Wobble got into a row with Nick Kent at the 100 Club. They were probably being protective... Nick would slag me off constantly in the press, so when he turned up at our gigs, I'd have something to say to him...

PHOTO: RELAY PHOTOS

Nick Kent: I started noticing that this guy [Sid Vicious] would, whenever he walked past, kick me in the shins. At first, it seemed like a clumsy mistake; the second time, this was on purpose.

Roger Armstrong: I was right beside them and Johnny was winding Sid up, in a half-joking sort of way, to go and get the hippy [Kent]. Sid, sadly, was just mad enough to go and do it...

Nick Kent: It all happens very quickly. Lydon goes onstage and Sid decides to stand directly in front of me. I tap him on the shoulder and I say, very careful, "Could you move over?" Sid immediately pulls this chain out. He makes some remark which he thought was insulting, like, "I don't like your trousers." The guy next to me immediately makes a motion towards Vicious and then pulls his knife out, and he really wants to cut my face. Years later, I find out his name is Wobble. This was a real speed freak and this is when it got very unhealthy.

Jah Wobble: Sid wasn't a rucker, but he lashed him with a chain and then I had a go, but we were just mucking about.

Nick Kent: It wasn't painful. The main thing was that it drew a lot of blood, which was just pouring down my face and my chest. Ron Watts grabbed Sid off me. None of those guys there, like Mick Jones, did a fucking thing.

17 June 1976

Blondie release their debut single, X Offender, in the US.

Ian Dury And The Kilburns headline the Midsummer Music Festival Benefit, Assembly Hall, Walthamstow, supported by The Stranglers and the Sex Pistols.

Tony Wilson: All you could see when you went in was this semi-circle of people standing in front of the stage. This seemed mystifying, until I went a bit closer and discovered that the arc of the circle was the distance that Johnny Rotten could spit.

Ian Dury: He [Johnny Rotten] had the safety pin, which was the sartorial elegance that I had inspired myself with, and he was leaning forwards and growling and holding the microphone just like I did. And Malcolm had me on one side and Fred, our handler and social secretary, was on the other, going, "What's all that about then, Malcolm? He's copying me, isn't he?" And Malcolm was just squeaking.

30 June 1976

Stuart Goddard places an ad in the Melody Maker classified section saying: "Beat on a bass with the B-sides." Three days later, via the ad, Goddard meets Andy Warren and they form the band which eventually mutates into Adam And The Ants.

4 July 1976

The Sex Pistols play at the Black Swan, Sheffield, supported by The Clash, making their first live appearance.

John Lydon: Strummer and the rest of them had a horrible attitude at that gig. Keith Levene was in the band and he was the only one who could actually hold a decent conversation with us. Bernie Rhodes, Malcolm's ex-partner, was managing them and it was their first public gig. Malcolm and Bernie were competing, so Bernie was revving this band to take a very anti-Pistols stance – as if they were the real kings of punk.

The Sex Pistols play London's Lyceum (above), the night Paul Weller realised he had to "be part of this"; and (below) Blondie release their US debut, X Offender, 17 June 1976.

American Independence Day is celebrated at The Roundhouse, London with a show headlined by The Flamin' Groovies, supported by the Ramones, making their UK debut, plus The Stranglers.

Chrissie Hynde: I was trying to get a band together when I saw them [the Ramones] at The Roundhouse. The punk scene in London was very closely knit and anti-everything. The Ramones were the only "outside" band that everyone looked up to.

Joey Ramone: Whatever they were expecting, we gave them. We totally freaked them out.

Mark Perry (founder, Sniffin' Glue): That performance was damn rock'n'roll, feet on the monitors. Fantastic!

Chris Wilson (The Flamin' Groovies): When they came off, Johnny Ramone was in tears because the punks had been spitting on the band. That was a purely London thing – nobody did that in New York. I remember him saying, "They got it on my guitar... they got it on my pick!" And Joey still didn't know if they'd gone down well or not. "Did they like us? Did they hate us?" He really couldn't tell.

5 July 1976

During the second Flamin' Groovies/Ramones gig at Dingwalls, Camden, London, a glass of beer is thrown at Joey Ramone by Glen Matlock of the Sex Pistols. The Pistols are banned.

Mickey Lee (Ramones roadie): Before the gig, all of us, the Ramones and the roadies, were heading for the backstage door, and standing in the alley was The Clash. They were all wearing leather jackets, like the Ramones, but where we had the long Beatle cuts, they all looked like Richard Hell, with the spiky hair.

Joey Ramone: That show was crazy, probably even crazier [than the Roundhouse] because it was a club. All the kids were hanging out – the would-be Clash, the Pistols, the Damned, people like that.

Bruce Gilbert (guitarist, Wire): There was a kerfuffle at the door. It was obviously McLaren, and he was trying to get his group in. They were so dangerous-looking, these boys. It wasn't contrived, but they looked like Dickensian urchins. They had shoes on but no socks, and they looked like they couldn't have got that way without being alcoholics, but they were young boys. They were perfect.

Glen Matlock (bassist, Sex Pistols): I wanted to see just how tough they really were so, after a couple of numbers, I lobbed a plastic glass full of beer at them. I'm not proud of it, but I did do it. They weren't that tough, because they stopped playing, but then they started up again and finished the set. As a result, though, the Pistols got banned from Dingwalls.

9 July 1976

The Ramones' first UK single, Blitzkrieg Bop, is released.

Joey Ramone: I hate to blow the mystique, but at the time we really liked bubblegum music, and we really liked The Bay City Rollers. Their song Saturday Night had a great chant in it, so we wanted a song with a chant in it: "Hey! Ho! Let's go!" Blitzkrieg Bop was our Saturday Night.

The Sex Pistols play at the Lyceum, London, supporting The Pretty Things and Supercharge.

Paul Weller: They were the last band on – six in the morning or something – and we were all speeding out of our heads. That was it for me – I've got to be part of this. It was happening, unlike a hick town like Woking. People have a chance to be themselves in London.

John Ingham (journalist, Sounds): That was the night John stubbed out cigarettes on the back of his hand while he was singing. That frightened me. He was the most maniacal thing alive. It was back to Iggy – that unpredictability.

13 July 1976

First issue of punk fanzine, Sniffin' Glue, is published, featuring the Ramones, The Flamin' Groovies, The Stranglers, Blue Öyster Cult, Runaways, Television, Eddie And The Hot Rods, The 101'ers and Todd Rundgren.

Sex rated: Siouxsie Sioux (top left) and the Bromley Contingent's Debbie throw shapes during a Pistols gig.

"It was absolutely bizarre, the most shocking thing I have ever seen in my life."

New Order's Peter Hook samples the Sex Pistols live

Mark Perry: Seeing the Ramones for the first time, I really wanted to get involved. There weren't any magazines about punk so I started my own fanzine. It was just me in the beginning. My then girlfriend Louise Edwards photocopied the first 50 copies at her work. By the third issue my school friend Steve Mick got involved, and then, for the ninth issue, we got Danny Baker in.

The Sex Pistols begin recording demos with their live soundman Dave Goodman in their Denmark Street, London, rehearsal room.

Dave Goodman: I knew what I wanted and what they were capable of. They set up live. It was bare essentials up top and the room down below was soundproofed. We set the studio deck upstairs on Steve's bed and ran a cable downstairs and recorded it on four-track and overdubbed later on eight-track.

15 July 1976

Demos by DP Costello are played on Charlie Gillett's Sunday night BBC Radio show, Honky Tonk. DP will soon become Elvis Costello.

20 July 1976

The Sex Pistols play at the Lesser Free Trade Hall, Manchester, supported by Slaughter And The Dogs and the Buzzcocks. First live airing of Anarchy In The UK.

Peter Hook: I went there with Bernard because we'd read in the NME about the violence at one of their London gigs, which, as these young lads from Salford, interested us. We'd been through the Deep Purple and Led Zep thing but this was different. It was about a lifestyle. Nothing since has produced that same feeling of wonderment and cold fear. The next day I went out and bought a bass, and Bernard and I immediately formed a band. It was the same for other people all over the country.

Steve Diggle (bassist, the Buzzcocks): After the gig we went and made a demo, and recorded Spiral Scratch for £500. The idea that you could make your own record was revolutionary.

21 July 1976

The Vibrators play at the Windsor Castle, London.

Knox (singer, the Vibrators): We should have a bigger place in the punk thing... they occasionally still say we jumped on the punk bandwagon when if these people really did their homework, they would know I was playing early Vibrators songs two or three years before the Vibrators started, in a band called Despair.

7 August 1976

Melody Maker puts the Sex Pistols on its front cover.

13 August 1976

The Clash are launched to the press, with a private performance at their management's rehearsal

PHOTO: RAY STEVENSON

studio, Chalk Farm, London.

Giovanni Dadomo (reviewer, Sounds): It was like being hit by a runaway fire engine... Strummer seems to have finally found his niche... they're the first band to come along who'll really frighten the Sex Pistols shitless.

14 August 1976

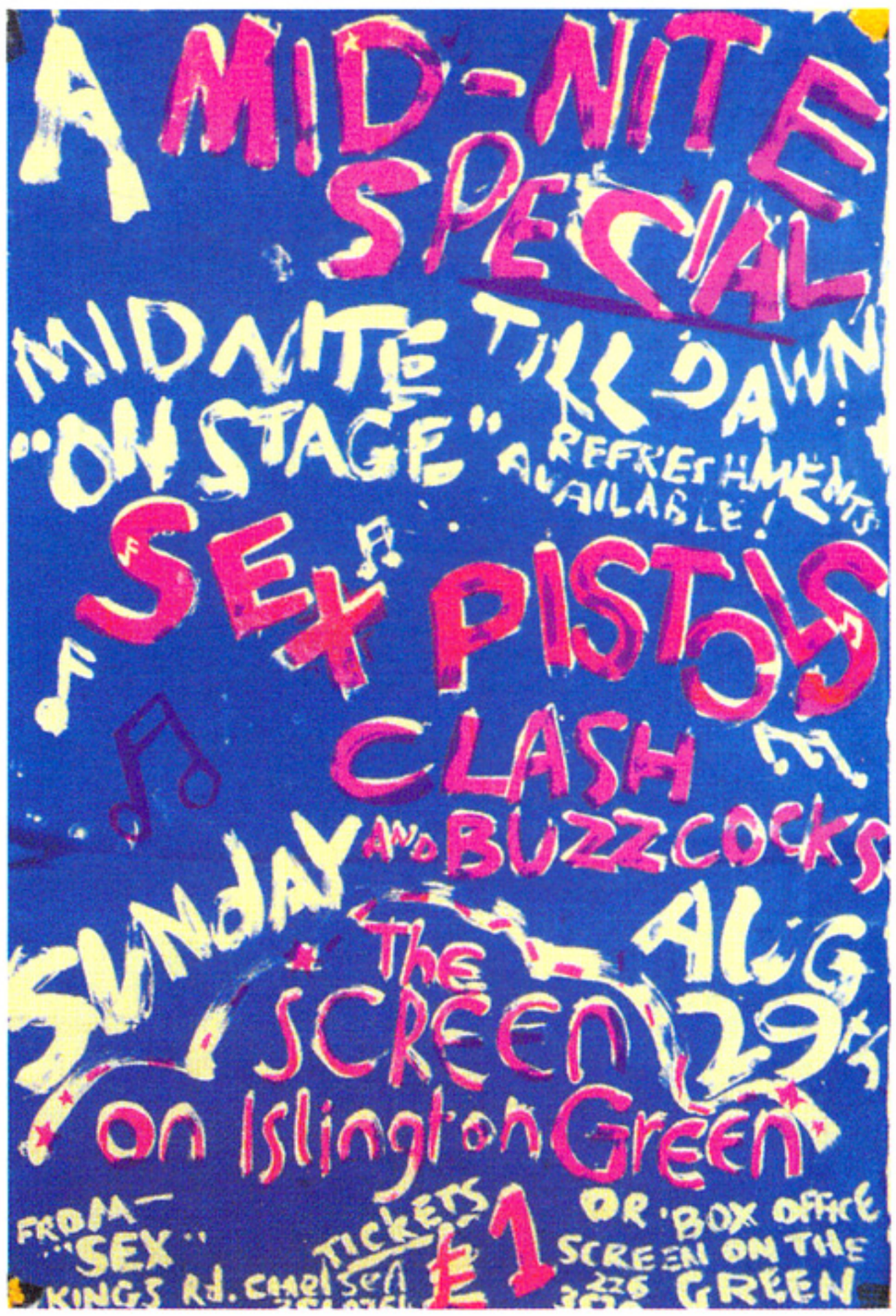
Funded by a £400 loan from pub rock band Dr Feelgood, alternative/indie label Stiff Records is launched with the release of So It Goes/Heart Of The City by Nick Lowe.

Dave Robinson (co-founder, Stiff Records): The idea of Stiff was to be a conduit for people who could not find the music business any other way. My theory was that there's an Elvis Presley out there, but he's working in a factory in Coventry and he doesn't know how to get in touch with me.

15 August 1976

The Damned play at The Nashville, London.

Elvis Costello: The Damned were the best punk group, because there was no art behind them that I could see; they were just enjoying themselves. They were just nasty – I loved them from the start. I liked the Pistols as well – but you could see the concern behind it. It's dishonest to say, "Oh, yes, we were just wild." They weren't just wild. It was considered and calculated art. The Clash were the same.



Excess all areas: The Pistols hit Manchester (top); Nick Lowe's So It Goes launches Stiff Records (above); the Screen On The Green festival flyer (right).

29 August 1976

The Sex Pistols, The Clash and the Buzzcocks play at the Screen On The Green, Islington, London, and in the audience are future Banshees Siouxsie Sioux and Steve Severin, plus Billy Idol.

Richard Boon (manager, the Buzzcocks): The Clash went out into the alleyway to get dressed so that no-one could see that they were wearing slogans and paint-splatter. There was that urge to secure their turf.

Roger Armstrong: Malcolm McLaren had a big row with The Clash's manager Bernie Rhodes, and the PA system was turned down for every band except the Pistols, to make them seem better – but, even then, it wasn't one of their best gigs. In fact, the Buzzcocks were the most impressive band that night.

Johnny Rotten: I got my name from Steve saying, "You've got rotten teeth, you have." But that stopped at the Screen On The Green, when the microphone slammed me in the face and knocked out the two green fangs Steve found so disgusting.

Nick Mobbs (A&R head, EMI): The Screen On The Green gig gave me this incredible feeling in the stomach. I think I'll remember it until the day I die. It reminded me of when I was a fan, back when I had nothing to do with the business. And yet, at the same time, my head was saying, "They're not very good." And, although I knew that wasn't the major consideration, I would lie awake all night thinking about it, wondering whether it was something EMI could handle.

TIME CAPSULE

As punk explodes into the nation's consciousness, Britain experiences its driest summer since 1727. Also happening...

15 May
Abba's Greatest Hits tops the UK album chart for eight weeks.

12 June
Combine Harvester, The Wurzels' anthem, goes to Number 1.

4 July
Israeli commandos rescue 106 passengers held hostage by Palestinian hijackers.

20 July
NASA scientists receive the first pictures transmitted by Viking 1 from the surface of Mars.

31 August
Police arrest 68 and 150 are injured as race riots break out at the Notting Hill Carnival.

30 August 1976

Joe Strummer of The Clash watches London's Notting Hill Carnival erupt into violence.

Joe Strummer: Ladbroke Grove was lined with rebels while cop cars were speeding through and being pelted with rocks and cobblestones and cans. It was like a bowling alley. I ducked in The Elgin and said, "Gimme a couple of drinks!" I downed one and took the second outside, and I saw Paul [Simonon] throw a plastic cone at a police motorcycle.

We hadn't noticed that all the white faces had gone. Suddenly this young posse came up. "Hey, man, what you got in that pocket there?" I was carrying this transistor radio, but I had this brick in the other pocket, and I said, "Don't say that shit to me." They shrunk back because I was shouting really loud. That was when I realised I had to write a song called White Riot, because it wasn't our fight. It was the one day of the year when the blacks were going to get their own back against the atrocious way the police behaved.

1 September 1976

The Sex Pistols record a live performance for TV show So It Goes at Granada Studios, Manchester. It's broadcast three days later.

Tony Wilson: They'd had quite a few drinks beforehand and, although they were supposed to do three-and-a-half minutes, they ended up playing for about seven and then trashed their gear. The audience was stunned and, when it was over, there was silence except for the sound of the producer's footsteps stamping down from the control booth. He was looking for somebody to hit.

5 September 1976

The Kursaal Flyers play at the Roundhouse, London, supported by The Clash.

Will Birch (drums, The Kursaal Flyers): The minute they walked in the building I knew it was all over. To me, their sound mattered not one iota – they had the look. As a five-piece, they made a right rotten racket; clearly, the rule book had been dispensed with and the cat was being formally introduced to the pigeons.

13 September 1976

Dave Vanian gives up his day job as a gravedigger to go full-time with The Damned.

17 September 1976

The Sex Pistols play at the Maximum Security Prison, Chelmsford, England.

Steve Jones (guitarist, Sex Pistols): We went on pretty early, it must have been about six, and it was still daylight. I can't believe it happened actually, it seems so weird that they let us play there. But they loved it, a chance to get out of the cell, a real captive audience. At the time that was the best sort of audience we could get. It was a good show. They were all sitting down, behaving themselves, though one nutter got up, dancing around like some old hippy.

THE CLASH

Being the best punk band wasn't good enough for The Clash. They wanted to be the only band that ever mattered. Here's how they did it. By John Aizlewood.

THE FILE

Personnel: Joe Strummer (vocals/guitar), Mick Jones (vocals/guitar), Paul Simonon (bass), Topper Headon (drums).
Hometown: London
Formed: 1976
The gameplan: To become the biggest rock'n'roll band on the planet.
First gig: 4 July, 1976, Black Swan, Sheffield.
First record: White Riot, April 1977.
Biggest UK hit: Should I Stay Or Should I Go (Number 1), March 1991.

For a group who made things so complicated for themselves, The Clash's goal was simple. They wanted to be the best rock'n'roll (and it was always "rock'n'roll" for The Clash, never merely "rock") band on the planet. Everything else – the incessant bickering, the rampaging egos, the muddy politics and the sheer stupidity – were contributing factors. But that's all they were and nothing was so merely a factor than The Clash's relationship with punk.

Essentially an art school rather than working-class movement, punk was always the preserve of those who were too thick for university but too canny to go on the dole or get a proper job. John Mellor was an ideal punk. He was raised in Ankara, where his father was a diplomat, and Croydon, where his father received an MBE and sent little John to private school. By 1974, John Mellor had become Woody Mellor, alternating between busking and playing pub rock with The 101'ers. Pub rock was punk's chancer-attracting predecessor. Then, in the case of the re-re-christened Joe Strummer and his new friends Mick Jones and Paul Simonon, they saw the Sex Pistols – supporting The 101'ers in April 1976, as it happens – and the pub rockers became punks.

"Punk was an attitude, not a music or a fashion. And I've got it inbred." Joe Strummer

"Punk was an attitude, not a music or a fashion," remembers Strummer. "If I see a situation I'll fucking cut right to the heart of it. That's a punk attitude and I've got it inbred."

In the summer of 1976, before they had songs – although 101'ers songs such as Jail Guitar Doors would resurface under The Clash's banner – they had a plan. Strummer would become propaganda minister and his slogan THE CLASH ARE THE ONLY BAND THAT MATTERS was all anyone ever needed to know. Mick Jones had the rock'n'roll chops and no fear of pop.

Paul Simonon was the most beautiful man in punk and his art school background meant the band he had christened would always look great. Soon he would learn to play the bass. After a lengthy audition process, Terry Chimes joined on drums, but would be fired in January 1977 only to briefly rejoin in 1982 when his replacement Nicky 'Topper' Headon was "indisposed", ie, whacked out of his gourd on the finest Pakistani heroin.

By July 1976, The Clash were ready to make their live debut in Sheffield supporting their catalysts, the Sex Pistols. Oddly, even with the Jubilee on the horizon, punk was not especially political. The Damned were cartoon figures, the Pistols' agenda was straight out of art school and the rest were also-rans. Even so, the gap in the market was difficult to spot, so the earliest Clash songs were concerned with relationships (Deny), self-indulgence (What's My Name) or contraceptives (Protex Blue). Mick Jones was in charge, musically at least.

Then Strummer and Simonon went to the Notting Hill Carnival. These days the Notting Hill Carnival is just a weekend of hell for the local trustafarians, with news previews promising trouble and then reporting there was none. Back then, the Carnival was a few days of hell for locals who would soon be ethnically cleansed by the trustafarians and a blood-stained riot between London's black population and the police. Strummer and Simonon watched the streets of West London burn. The Clash suddenly had a purpose and it wasn't Jones wittering on about condoms. The gap in the market had come to them, and how they embraced it.

The Sex Pistols first spotted the potential of the Queen's Silver Jubilee, but The Clash were the first to see punk as a way of articulating the frustration of the underclass. After touring with the Sex Pistols, The Clash were signed by CBS – afterall, every record company needed a punk group – a move they would later regret.

"The Clash sold out when they signed to CBS," declared Sniffin' Glue editor Mark Perry. But nobody listened, chiefly because there were no indies then.

White Riot, their first single, concerned Strummer and Simonon's adventures in Notting Hill. Later that month came their self-titled debut LP, not The Clash's best, but probably the best unashamedly punk album. A year later, Give 'Em Enough Rope would take them away from punk forever and towards being the best rock'n'roll band on the planet. By the time of their third LP, London Calling, that's exactly what they were.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

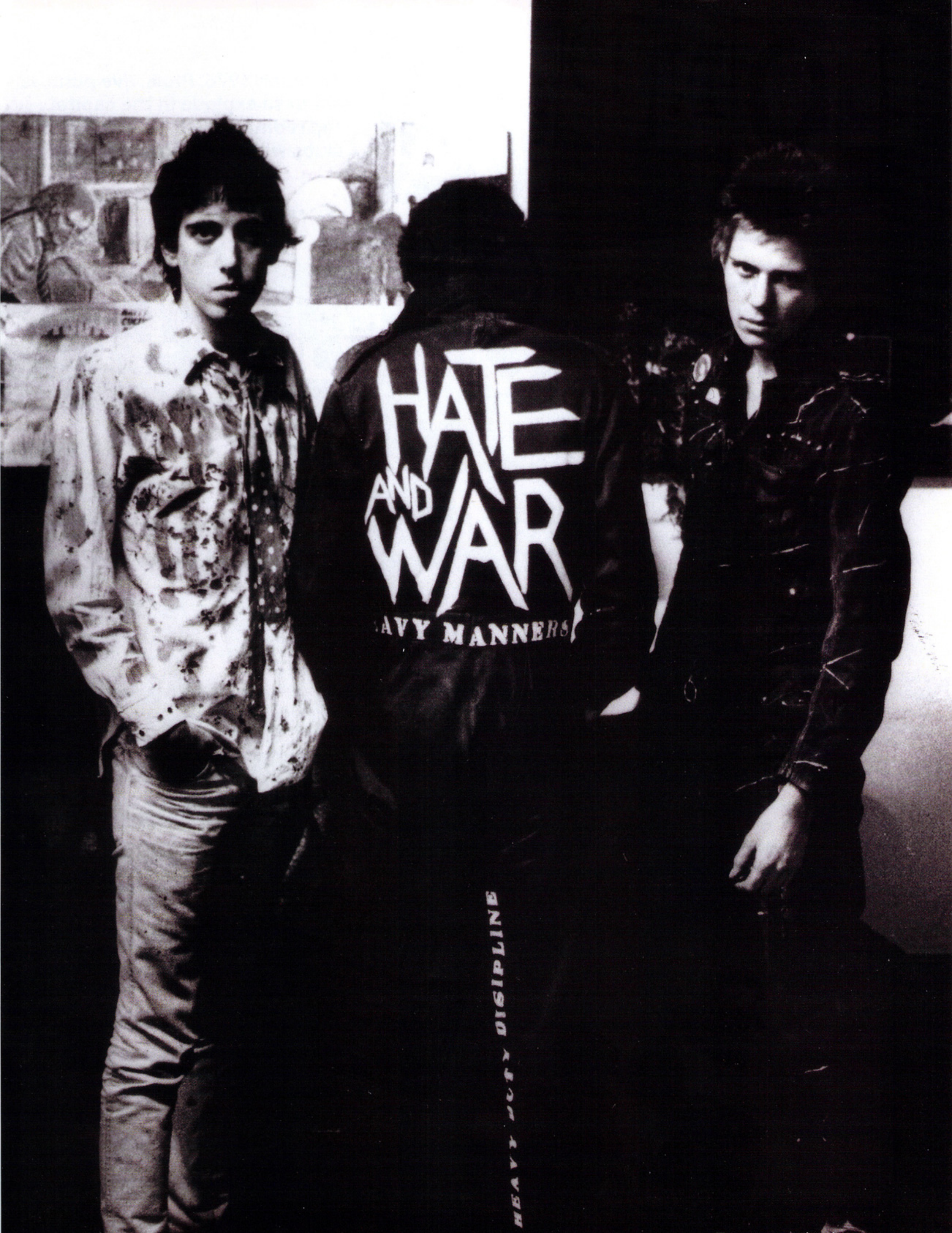
Joe Strummer
The Clash's spiritual leader stuck with it until the end. "I was tired of being in The Clash," he shrugs. He acted, joined The Pogues for a bit, but always gave the impression of drifting. "I should've moved to France and got my head together. I found it rough in the '80s being out of fashion with all that crummy music." He now lives in Somerset with his second wife and makes excellent records with his band The Mescaleros.

Paul Simonon
Like Strummer, Simonon stayed The Clash's full course. His post-Clash output was limited to an LP with his band Havana 3am, which reached 169 in the US charts. Since they dissolved, he has dedicated himself to painting, but he's kept his looks and remains the only Clash member to appear on a Bob Dylan album, playing bass on Down In The Groove's Sally Sue Brown in 1988.

Mick Jones
Simonon and Strummer sacked Mick Jones in 1983. He formed Big Audio Dynamite, Big Audio Dynamite II and Big Audio, enjoying the most success of any Clash member outside the group. They struggled after viral pneumonia almost killed Jones in 1989, and split after Big Audio's 1996 LP, Entering A New Ride, failed to get a release.

Topper Headon
Headon (above, far left) quit The Clash in 1982 to battle his heroin addiction, as detailed on his 1986 solo LP, Waking Up. Alas, in 1987 he was jailed for supplying the heroin which killed an acquaintance. On his release, he guested on the only LP by Flowered Up and then became a cabbie in Chiswick. He currently lives in Dover.

PHOTOS: RETNA/CAROLINE COON/CAMERA PRESS



There was an art-riot goin' on: The Clash's (from left) Jones, Strummer and Simonon strike their finest rebel poses in 1977.

LONDON CALLING

Summer, 1976. Punk, *live* punk, is about to explode in the capital. Tap rooms, Poly bars and sweaty clubs will host its unwashed greats. Johnny Black maps out its rise.

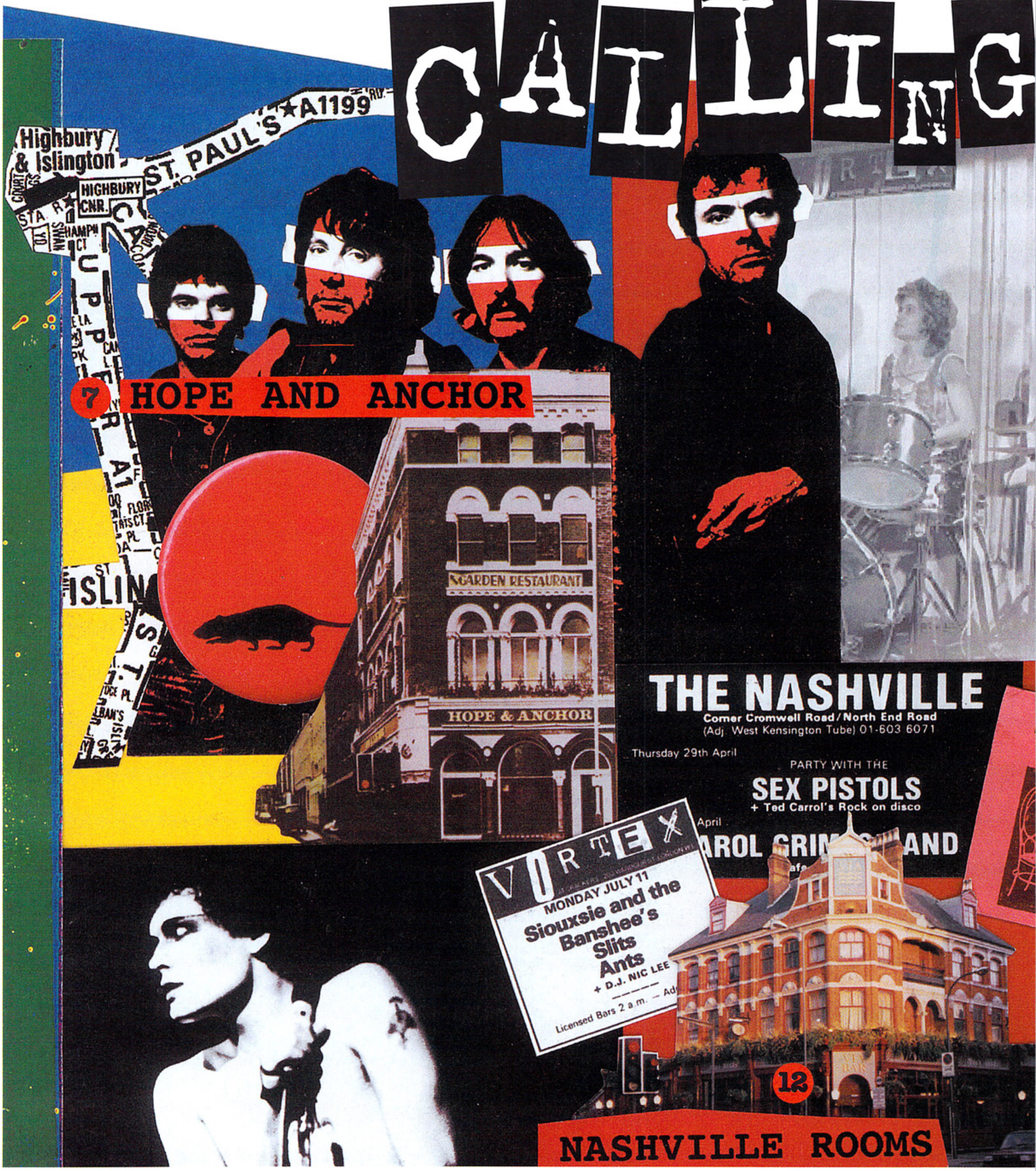


PHOTO: PAUL BURGESS

The SCREEN on Islington Green
100 CLUB
London's Music Centre
100 CLUB
MEMBERSHIP CARD
The ROXY
OXFORD CIRCUS
TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD
W.C.2.
OXFORD STREET
8
11
THE MARQUEE
16
ST.MARTINS
DENMARK STREET
17
THE VORTEX
CHARING CROSS
ROAD
THE ROXY
14
PICCADILLY CIRCUS
TRAFALGAR SQUARE
STRAND
4
CHARING CROSS PIER
REGENT STREET
THE ICA
9
THE MALL
CHARING CROSS
BUCKINGHAM PALACE
e
lour St. W.1 437-6603
lege Card
G JUNE 30th 1977
ble - Not valid until signed

LONDON CALLING

1 BATTERSEA PARK
Battersea Park, SW11

Following a GLC ban on their live gigs, The Stranglers managed to organise an event in Battersea Park on 16 September, 1978, supported by Spizz Oil, The Skids and, um, Peter Gabriel. Men in blue are seen jostling for position at the front of the stage when strippers joined the band for Nice'N'Sleazy. No charges were ever brought. The occasion was captured (in sound only) on the Live (X-cert) album.

2 VICTORIA PARK
Victoria Park, E5

After a massive Anti-Nazi League march from Trafalgar Square on 30 April, 1978, The Clash, Steel Pulse, The Tom Robinson Band and X-Ray Spex played to 80,000 fans from the main stage. The back of a truck sufficed for The Ruts.

3 CENTRAL SCHOOL OF ART AND DESIGN
Southampton Row, WC1

"A lousy set-up," according to former student Joe Strummer, the Central was also the scene of many early punk gigs including the debut of Generation X on 10 December, 1976.

4 CHARING CROSS PIER
Victoria Embankment, WC2

The fabled Sex Pistols boat trip to "celebrate" the Jubilee, on 7 June 1977, featured the band playing live onboard the pleasure boat Queen Elizabeth for the entertainment of a large contingent of media liggers. The rumpus attracted the river police, who cut the power and forced the boat to dock, after which 11 passengers – including Malcolm McLaren and Vivienne Westwood – were arrested and then later released. The event was caught on film and included in The Great Rock'N'Roll Swindle.

5 ELECTRIC BALLROOM
184 Camden High Street, NW1

Scene of "Sid Sods Off" on 22 August, 1978, the final live extravaganza by Mr Vicious before heading off to New York, where he OD'd. The legendary line-up included: Sid (lead vocals), Rat Scabies (drums), Glen Matlock (bass), Steve New (guitar) and Nancy Spungen (backing vocals). Among the audience was Elvis Costello, Pistol Steve Jones, The Slits, Captain Sensible, Blondie and Joan Jett.

6 THE GREYHOUND
Croydon

The Jam's first London gig in November '74, supporting Stackridge and Thin Lizzy. The Stackridge fans pelted them with turnips. In January 1977, The Greyhound hosted another debut, The Only Ones.

7 HOPE AND ANCHOR
207 Upper Street, N1

A venerated if grubby pub-rock gig venue. Future Stiff Records mogul Dave Robinson ran a recording studio here. The pub's musical policy is well illustrated by the Hope And Anchor Front Row Festival album, which documents a three-week live event held in November 1977, including 999 and The Stranglers. The Clash did fund-raising gigs for the venue in 1984.

"A riot ensued after The Clash encouraged The Rainbow's crowd to remove the venue's seats."

8 100 CLUB
Oxford Street, W1

Immortalised by The Clash in Deny, the 100 Club was formally a jazz venue, but flourished as a punk gig through the late '70s. The Damned debuted here in July 1976, supporting the Sex Pistols, but the 100's days of thunder came on 20/21 September, 1976, with the Punk Festival which brought the Pistols, The Damned, The Clash, Buzzcocks and Subway Sect together under one roof. Not only that but it saw the first gig by Siouxsie And The Banshees, featuring the performing debut of Sid Vicious on drums and future Ant, Marco Pirroni on guitar. On 21 September, Sid was arrested following an incident in which a 17-year-old girl lost the sight in one eye when a glass was thrown across the pub. Vicious was found innocent, but fined £125 for carrying a knife.

9 THE ICA
The Mall, SW1

When Patti Smith saw The Clash here on 23 October, 1976, she was sufficiently carried away by the music (and, apparently, by Paul Simonon's bone structure) to end up dancing onstage. By describing their musical style as "country", Adam And The Ants blagged their debut gig at the ICA restaurant on 10 May, 1977. When Adam donned a leather mask to sing Beat My Guest, the management had the band unceremoniously removed.

10 MAN IN THE MOON
392 King's Road, SW5

Adam And The Ants played some of their earliest supporting gigs here. When they finally headlined, on 25 May, 1977, the punters walked out after two numbers, but the set was seen by Jordan (who had previously sold Adam a tasteful Cambridge Rapist T-shirt in Malcolm McLaren's nearby Sex boutique). She was impressed enough to go on and manage them.

11 THE MARQUEE
90 Wardour Street, W1.

The Marquee largely avoided punk acts after unruly crowd behaviour when the Sex Pistols supported Eddie And The Hot Rods on Valentine's Day, 1976. Nevertheless, Neil Spencer of NME considered the sight of a thigh-booted Siouxsie worthy of a mention in a review which also used the term "punk rock" as applied to the English New Wave, for the first time.

12 NASHVILLE ROOMS
171 North End Road, W14

Long-time favourite pub rock venue which, come 1976, embraced punk with gigs by the Sex Pistols, The Stranglers, John Cooper Clarke and others. When The Stranglers were having problems with bookings because of their reputation, they chose the Nashville as venue for a 'secret' show under the name The Old Codgers.

13 THE RAINBOW
232 Seven Sisters Road, N4

With punk's popularity cemented, the long-established Rainbow opened its doors to the new breed, but soon fell into conflict with the artists. Strangler Hugh Cornwell induced GLC hysteria on 30 January, 1977 by wearing a T-shirt emblazoned with the word "Fuck" (parodying the Ford logo) and soon after Siouxsie was arrested for "obstruction" after a Heartbreakers gig. The Clash asked to have the venue's seats removed for the final date of their White Riot tour on 9 May, 1977 and when the management refused to comply, the band encouraged the audience to do the job themselves. A near-riot ensued to the strains of London's Burning.

14 THE ROXY
41 Street, WC2

This former gay club was revamped by Andy Czechowski as London's first significant punk venue. Generation X ushered in The Roxy's period of fame by playing there on 14 December, 1976, followed by Johnny Thunders And The Heartbreakers on 2 December. From 1 January, 1977, with The Clash, the club went totally punk, putting on such bands as The Buzzcocks, X-Ray Spex, Wire, The Adverts, Slaughter And The Dogs, The Unwanted, Eater and Johnny Moped (featuring unknown guitarist Chrissie Hynde and Captain Sensible on backing vocals). The club closed with Siouxsie And The Banshees headlining on 23 April, 1977, and the following day saw the release of the Live At The Roxy album.

15 SCREEN ON THE GREEN
83 Upper Street, N1

On 29 August, 1976, the Sex Pistols were supported here by The Clash and The Buzzcocks. Record company A&R men were reportedly too intimidated to even enter the cinema. Sundry fearless rock scribes did venture in but were unimpressed describing The Clash as "the kind of garage band who should be speedily returned to the garage, preferably with the motor running" and the Buzzcocks as "rough as a bear's arse".

16 ST MARTIN'S COLLEGE OF ART
109 Charing Cross Road, WC2

Stuart Goddard, later Adam Ant, was in headliners Bazooka Joe when the Sex Pistols played their first concert as support in November 1975. A horrified social secretary pulled the plug after five numbers, but Goddard was sufficiently impressed to quit his band on the spot.

17 THE VORTEX
201 Wardour Street, W1

The Vortex opened on 11 July, 1977 with Siouxsie, Adam Ant, The Slits and Sham 69, whose Jimmy Pursey was singled out and fined £30 for breach of the peace. After playing two shows at the Vortex in November 1977, The Heartbreakers decided to call it a day.

PHOTO: LONDON FEATURES INTERNATIONAL, IDOLS, BARRY PLUMMER

CENTRAL SCHOOL OF ART 3

13 THE RAINBOW

5 ELECTRIC BALLROOM

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2 VICTORIA PARK

BATTERSEA PARK 1

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THE GREYHOUND 6

BUZZCOCKS

Punk wasn't all gobbing and safety pins – it could be brainy too, as proved by a band from Manchester called the Buzzcocks. By Roy Wilkinson.

THE FILE

Personnel: Howard Devoto (vocals), Pete Shelley (guitar), Steve Diggle (bass), John Maher (drums).
Hometown: Greater Manchester/Leeds
Formed: 1976
The gameplan: To introduce Reg Presley to Albert Camus... and then write love songs of endless poignancy.
First gig: 20 July 1976, Manchester Lesser Free Trade Hall.
First record: Spiral Scratch EP, January 1977.
Biggest UK hit: Ever Fallen In Love (With Someone You Shouldn't've) (Number 12), September 1978.

Formed by two men who, between them, had studied psychology, electronics, Fyodor Dostoevsky and Brian Eno, the Buzzcocks were perhaps never likely to join Sham 69's Jimmy Pursey as he bellowed the likes of Evil Way: "Been in the pub since half past five... Dad's down the dog track/I hope he has a fight... I'm gonna get my end away/I'm gonna get my end away!" As the Buzzcocks formed, they steadily accrued terse, adrenalised chord progressions and song titles like Boredom and Orgasm Addict. But they always sat on punk's more cerebral, reflective wing. Fittingly, the Buzzcocks began, in 1975, at a place of tertiary education; the Bolton Institute Of Technology.

"We just weren't moving in any direction. We *needed* to see the Sex Pistols." Howard Devoto

Howard Trafford, from Leeds, and Peter McNeish, from Leigh, joined forces, transforming themselves into Howard Devoto and Pete Shelley. Concurrently, they transformed an interest in The Stooges, The Velvet Underground, The Troggs, Bowie and Eno into a prototypical punk sound.

"We had in our mind what music we wanted to do," says Shelley today. "It was The Stooges, wasn't it? We wanted people to say it was rubbish and walk away." However, despite such confirmed ambitions, Devoto says that the Buzzcocks of this period were far from the finished article. "We were floundering around," he says. "We just weren't moving in any kind of musical world. We *needed* to see the Sex Pistols."

In February 1976, Shelley and Devoto travelled to London to see two Sex Pistols shows. Contact was made and, subsequently, Devoto and Shelley put on the Sex Pistols' first two shows in Manchester, legendary fixtures at the Lesser Free Trade Hall.

Within weeks of the second Sex Pistols show in Manchester, the first real Buzzcocks line-up had coalesced, with bassist Steve Diggle and drummer John Maher completing the picture. They began rehearsals, finding a particularly punk audience for their practice sessions – in the rehearsal basement lurked a Devoto pet, Monica, the Bengal Monitor Lizard. The Buzzcocks' first official release was the Spiral Scratch EP, which came out in January 1977. With its careening potency and a withering intelligence lurking behind its arch, cute nihilism, Spiral Scratch was a commercial and critical success. However, according to Devoto, any images of immediate entry to some all-encompassing punk-rock nirvana would be misleading.

"Well," he says, "there certainly wasn't the feeling, that, Wow, we're part of this explosive thing in Manchester. If you look at photos, often the audience was five blokes stood in a row. Even quite far into 1976 there wasn't a big audience for punk in Manchester. I remember a review that Tony Wilson wrote in the New Manchester Review. We were well into the punk period, but it said, I'm still waiting for Manchester's Bruce Springsteen. At this point, he'd had the Sex Pistols on his TV programme So It Goes. He was kind of thinking, punk could maybe be the future of music. But he still didn't think it was as life-changing as Springsteen, which tells you that punk wasn't necessarily seen as the most important thing in world at this time."

The Buzzcocks' own ambiguity regarding punk went graphically public when Devoto quit the band in February 1977. He'd become terminally frustrated with punk's bondage-trousered uniforms and codified blast of barré-chord bluster. He announced his departure in a press release. "I don't like music. I don't like movements. What was once unhealthily fresh is now a clean old hat."

By the end of 1977 Devoto had formed a new band, Magazine. With their lengthy, keyboard-adorned treatises on romance like Cold War, Magazine flew pointedly in the face of punk diktats. This was only accentuated by their namechecks for Raskolnikov, hero of Crime And Punishment, and occasional soul-funk covers (they recorded a version of Sly Stone's Thank You (Falettinme Be Mice Elf Agin). The Buzzcocks carried on with Shelley taking on vocals. Though their melodic incisions superficially remained true to punk templates, the love songs that regularly took them into the charts had a poignancy and fatalism miles removed from the sputum-drooling punker snarl. Even when Jimmy Pursey took up a lively interest in ballet, you wouldn't see either Howard Devoto or Pete Shelley rushing to join him for a duet.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

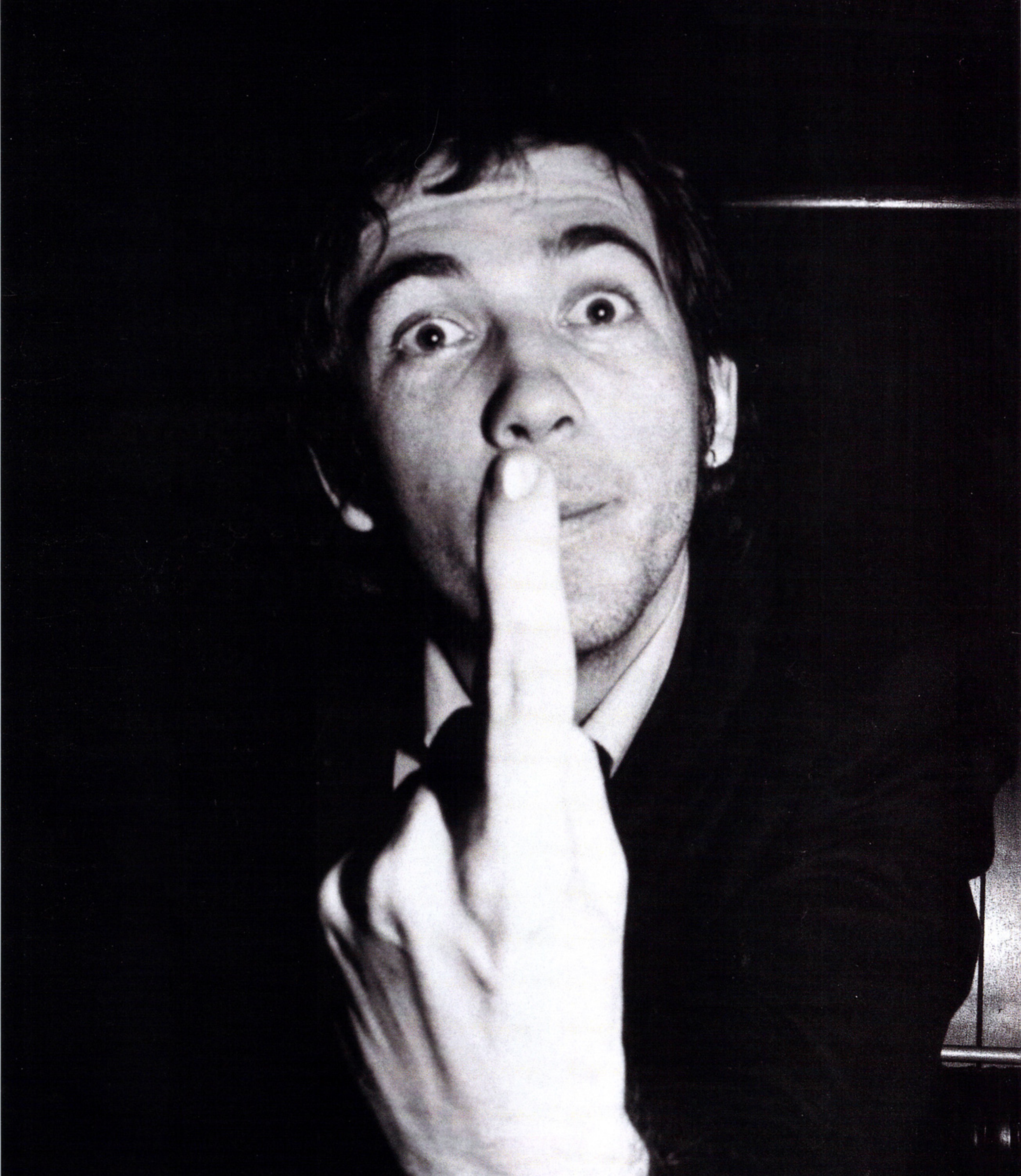
Howard Devoto
Devoto (second right) now works in a North London photo library that deals in post-war photojournalism. He combines this with the occasional musical venture. In 1998 he collaborated with Chester prog-punk band Mansun. In March 2002, Devoto ended a 25-year gap to record again with Pete Shelley. The result was the Buzzkunst album released under the banner of ShelleyDevoto.

Pete Shelley
The Buzzcocks' name lives on in more ways than BBC2 comedy vehicles. Shelley (far right) still pilots a fully functioning incarnation of the band. Their last album was 1996's All Set, but in March 2002, the Buzzcocks went into the studio to record a new LP. Admiration from new generations of bands has helped the Buzzcocks maintain a currency. Indeed, Kurt Cobain was a fan of the band and the Buzzcocks supported Nirvana on that band's last ever tour.

Steve Diggle
Also in the current version of the Buzzcocks. In 2001, Diggle (second left) toured as part of the acoustic Three Men And Black package. With Diggle playing alongside Jake Burns (Stiff Little Fingers), JJ Burnel (The Stranglers) and Pauline Black (The Selecter).

John Maher
After leaving the Buzzcocks, Maher (far left) founded John Maher Racing, a company that deals in the manufacture and supply of components for souped-up VW Beetles. Maher himself drag-raced such motors until 1994. He is currently in the process of transferring the business from Manchester to the Outer Hebrides.

PHOTOS: DAVID ARNOFF, PHIL MASON



Up yours!: Pete Shelley points the way.

EYEWITNESS

20 September 1976
to 21 September 1976

It's the Summer Of Hate™, and disturbing the trad-jazz peace of Oxford Street's best niterie are the Sex Pistols, The Clash and The Damned. The 100 Club Punk Festival saw names made, rozzers kept busy, and a musical revolution come of age.

1977 may have been the year when punk broke nationwide, but it was in 1976 that it really took shape. Naturally enough, London was the epicentre for the new breed and the 100 Club was its live venue of choice. Summer had been a particularly fruitful time for the new groups as they developed and honed their look and sound. It was a period of intense activity that was to culminate, in the autumn of '76, with a two-day festival showcasing the best punk bands. The festival was a celebration of the big names, but it also gave exposure to groups with little or no live experience. Finally, the gigs served as a focal point for punk fans, from London and around the country, who would go on to form bands of their own. Welcome, then, to the gathering of the tribes on London's Oxford Street...

As told to **Johnny Black**

September 1976

Opportunist club-owner identifies punk uprising and calls on Malcolm McLaren to lend a hand.

Ron Watts (Manager, 100 Club): It was the end of that long, hot summer. A glorious day. I'd been booking the Pistols into the 100 Club for months and people were starting to come from Manchester, Plymouth, Newcastle. The seeds were growing everywhere. A&R men had been down from all the major record labels, but they all turned their noses up. It occurred to me that some sort of event, call it a festival, was needed to put punk on the map. I was informally managing The Damned at that point and I got Malcolm McLaren involved because he was in with a lot of other bands, notably the Pistols.

Caroline Coon (journalist/founder of the drug charity, Release): When I heard about the festival I told Melody Maker I'd cover it. They didn't like it. They thought it was threatening, but it was obviously going to be a key moment because it would establish whether there was something really happening or not. No one even knew if there were enough bands to constitute a real new movement. Remember, there were no punk records in the shops and the Pistols and The Clash hadn't even signed to record labels.

The 100 Club massive: erm, barely containing their excitement.

Vic Godard (Subway Sect): Malcolm wanted as many groups as he could get [for the festival]. When he saw us, we'd never played in front of an audience and he thought we were so awful that there was no way we could do it. So he

THE CAST LIST

Caroline Coon
Became a luminary of the fledgling punk scene while writing for Melody Maker. Later wrote The Punk Rock Explosion and founded Release, the drug charity.

Siouxsie Sioux
The catalyst for the Sex Pistols' infamous four-letter joust with Bill Grundy, Siouxsie debuted at the 100 Club as a member of the 'Bromley Contingent' before forming the Banshees.

Captain Sensible
Established his punk credentials with The Damned, then went on to top the UK charts with a cover of Rodgers and Hammerstein's Happy Talk in 1982.

Steve Severin
Another member of the Bromley Contingent, the bassist remained with the Banshees until 1996. He has recorded successfully with the Cure's Robert Smith as The Glove.

Pete Shelley
Pete met Buzzcocks' co-founder, Howard Devoto, at the Bolton Institute of Technology in 1975 and the band debuted at the annual disco the following year. When Devoto quit in February 1977, Shelley replaced him as lead singer and guitarist.

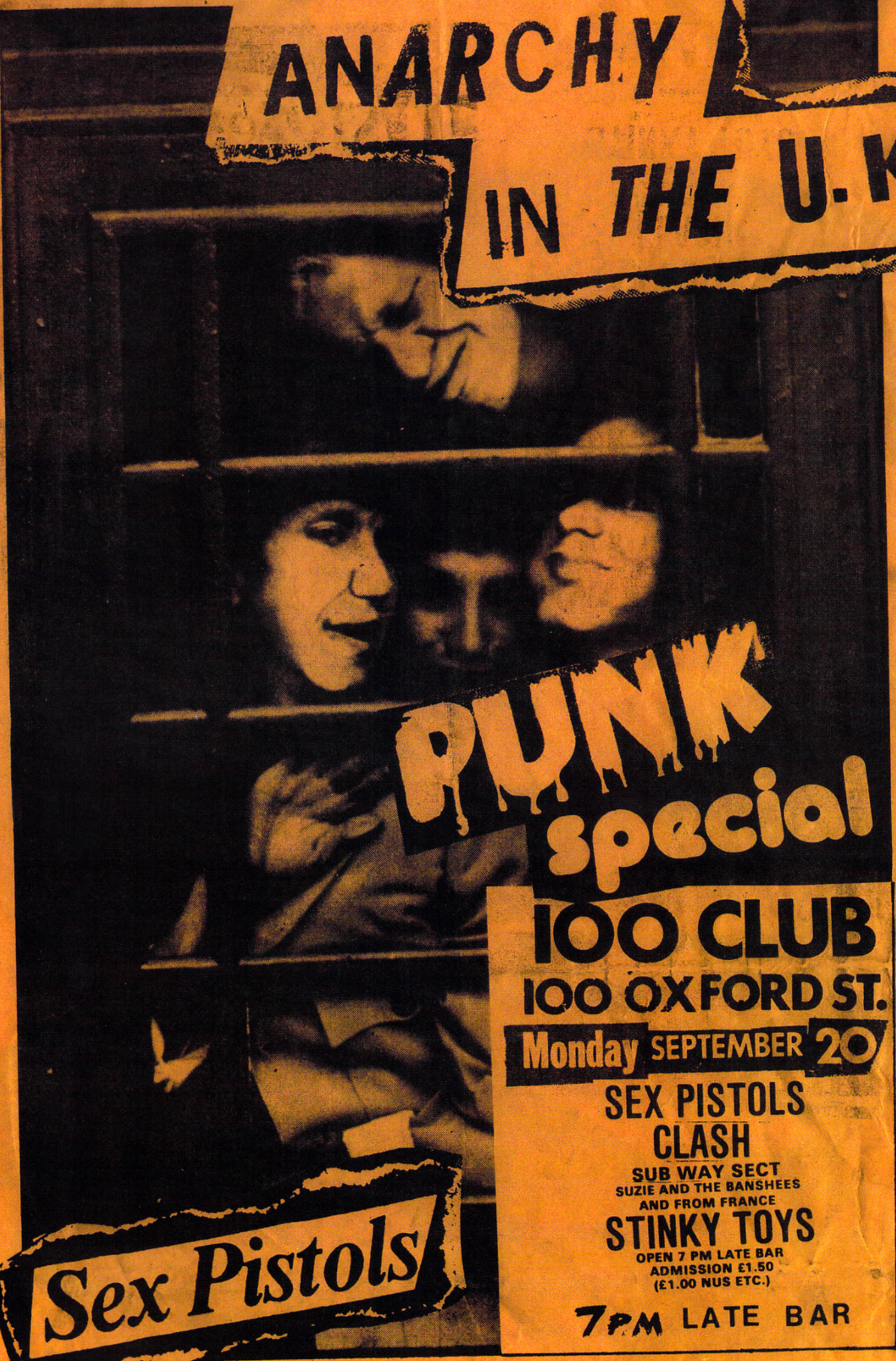
Ron Watts
Manager of the 100 Club, Ron began booking the Sex Pistols and other punk acts during the summer of 1976.

Andy Blade
Blade was the 15-year-old vocalist with young upstarts Eater. They issued their debut single, Outside View, in 1977. Blade pursued a solo career after Eater split the following year.

Vivienne Westwood
"I may be a rebel, but I'm not an outsider," proclaimed the fashion designer in 1983. Westwood (above) created the spiky-peroxide punk hairstyle and co-founded Let It Rock – later renamed Sex – with Malcolm McLaren in 1971.

PHOTOS: BARRY PLUMMER, REX FEATURES

ANARCHY IN THE U.K.



PUNK special

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Monday SEPTEMBER 20

SEX PISTOLS
CLASH
SUB WAY SECT
SUZIE AND THE BANSHEES
AND FROM FRANCE
STINKY TOYS

OPEN 7 PM LATE BAR
ADMISSION £1.50
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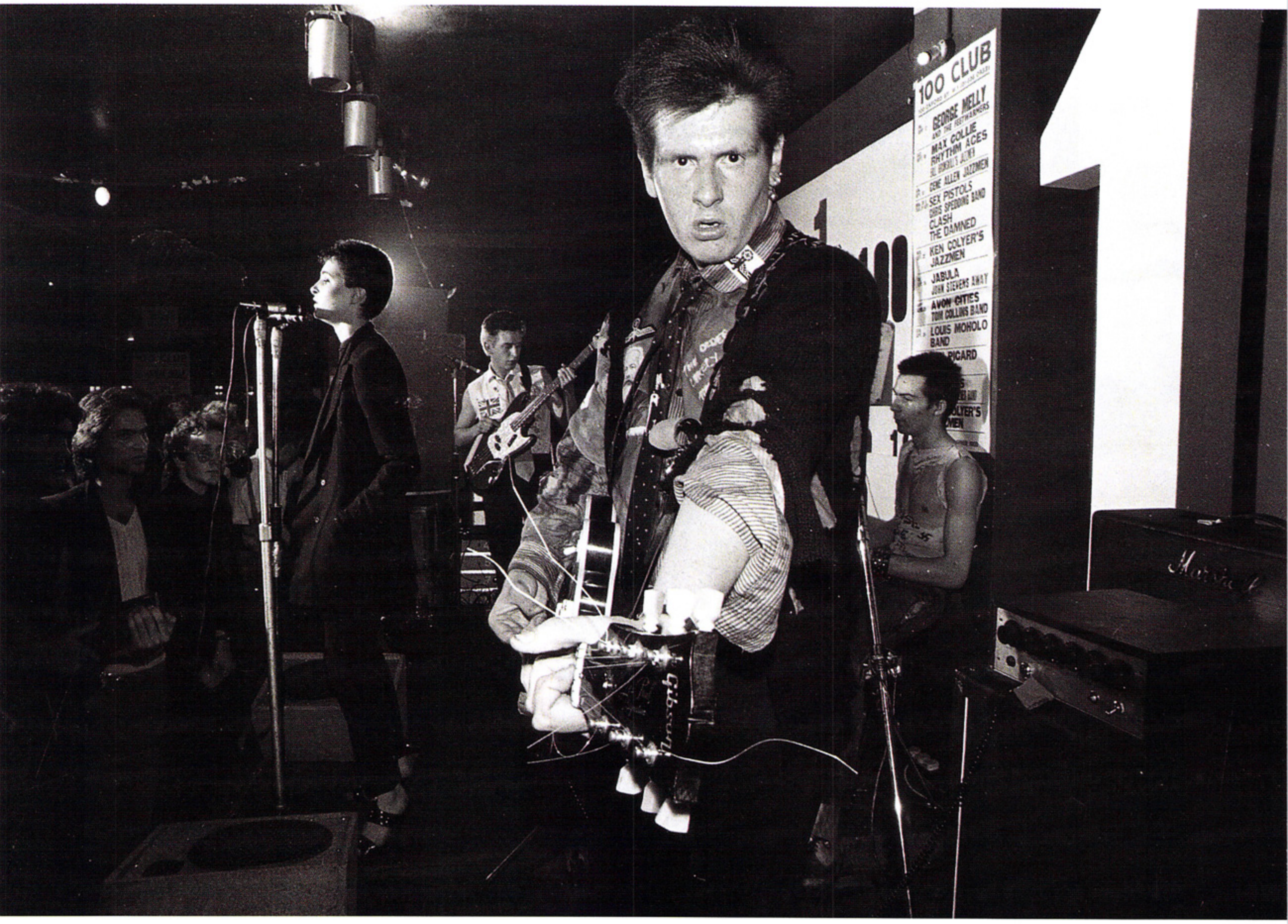
7PM LATE BAR

Sex Pistols

EYEWITNESS



"There were 500 people outside the club. It was the first time I'd seen a punk I didn't know in the street."

John Ingham, music journalist

booked us for rehearsals at a place in Chelsea from eight in the morning till seven at night, all week, and paid for it. We only had five songs.

Pete Shelley (guitarist, Buzzcocks): We'd done the Screen On The Green with the Pistols and then Malcolm called and asked if we'd do the festival as well.

Siouxsie Sioux: There was a vacant space and Malcolm was saying, We need another band. I said, We've got a band. We hadn't. The next day we rehearsed with Sid Vicious on drums. Marco Perroni we knew, as a friend of Sue Catwoman's, so it was him. Sid and Steven. We'd seen The Cry Of The Banshee on TV a couple of nights before and thought Banshee was a great word.

Marco Perroni (guitar, Banshees): We'd had an abortive rehearsal at The Clash's place on Monday. We realised then there was no point in trying to learn any songs.

20 September 1976

When the Kids arrive en masse, Siouxsie gets cold feet and Sid Vicious fails to ignite a race war.

John Ingham (journalist, Sounds): That first afternoon when people were putting down their gear and soundchecking, Ron Watts was saying there were going to be hundreds of people that night and the place would be packed. People told him he was out of his mind, but he went out, came back and said there were about 500 people outside. This was the first time I'd seen a punk I didn't know in the street.

Caroline Coon: I went out and talked with the kids in the queue. They were starting to define themselves as punks, not hippies. They were starting to distinguish themselves with the clothes, too. Not many had the bondage look yet, but they had ripped chinos, brothel creepers, faces scarred with blades. The girls were just starting to have their hair cut short. Their look mirrored the despair of the times.

Andy Blade (singer, Eater): We didn't know at the time, but the queue outside was like a who's who of people who were going to go on to form bands later. Shane MacGowan was there, I met Siouxsie, Gaye Advert, TV Smith and Chrissie Hynde.

Ron Watts: Malcolm and the Pistols were clearly up to something that afternoon. They kept getting into little huddles and going out to the café. I think he was signing them to a management contract.

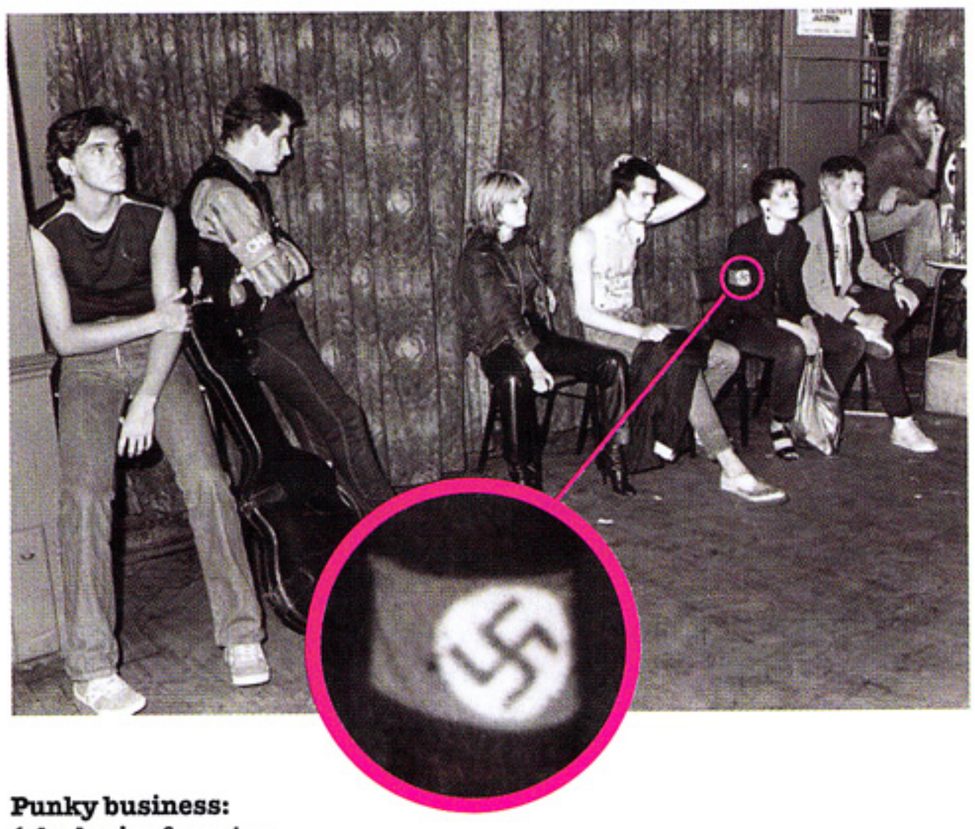
PHOTOS: RAY STEVENSON, BARRY PLUMMER x2

Glen Matlock (bassist, Sex Pistols): McLaren introduced us to [Steven] Fisher, the solicitor, who seemed a bit greasy. I read through the contract and took up a point about percentages, but John [Lydon] was quite daft about it. John didn't even read it. He said, You read it then? I said, Yeah, I read it. He said, Well, if there's anything wrong with it, it's your fault. And he signed it without even reading it.

Andy Blade: Ron Watts asked us to play, but on the day he couldn't let us because we were all so young, like 14 and 15, so the council wouldn't allow it.

Ron Watts: Even though I'd advertised the order they'd play in, there was continual jostling for position all day with the bands. There was a real rivalry between the Pistols and The Clash. The two bands would say hello and be civil to each other, but that was it. Sid Vicious was the worst problem. At one point in the afternoon, I had to disarm him. He took a dislike to Stinky Toys, purely on the grounds that they were French. He had a knife out and I had to get it away from him.

Caroline Coon: Siouxsie and Sid and the others were hanging around all afternoon trying to decide if they had the nerve to go onstage. Would they just be fans or could they be stars?



Punky business: (clockwise from top left) Siouxsie & The Banshees' debut gig; The Clash and Subway Sect find the premium seats; Siouxsie sports her "non-political" swastika.

Siouxsie was very un-self-confident about it, and you could see she was having to use her will power to overcome it. She was asking people what she should sing.

Captain Sensible (bassist, The Damned): We really didn't have any money for anything. We could hardly afford to even buy a drink at the bar. If you were really lucky Malcolm would buy you a drink. He was the only one in the whole place with money.

Steve Mick (Sniffin' Glue fanzine): Subway Sect came on first. I loved them. They chewed gum on the stage and looked vacant. After the Sect, the buzz was going round about the Pistols follower, Sid, who was going to play drums with the next band.

Ron Watts: Bernie Rhodes and Malcolm McLaren got into a huge row about Siouxsie wearing a swastika on her arm.

Bernie Rhodes (manager, The Clash): I felt she wasn't aware of what she was letting herself in for. If she used it, we too would be associated with the swastika. I felt she was mucking about with a loaded gun and we didn't want to have anything to do with it.

Siouxsie Sioux: I wouldn't apologise for it

EYEWITNESS

because it wasn't political at all. I saw it as just the gear that I wore.

Joe Strummer: Actually, the swastika thing went back at least a year. Bernie and Malcolm had worked together designing clothes and things. Malcolm had come up with this swastika armband and Bernie hated it. So when Bernie saw Siouxsie wearing it, it brought the old fight to a head again.

Siouxsie Sioux: When we went onstage, the idea was to annoy people so much that they'd chuck us off. It was taking the piss out of all the things we hated: Marco with his feedback, me wailing over the top of it singing Knockin' On Heaven's Door and The Lord's Prayer, Steve trying to turn his bass on, and Sid with his relentless banging.

Steve Mick: Everybody was excited and thought Sid was going to pull out his chain and lash out at the drums, but he was terrific. He kept a real clear drum tempo going.

Steve Severin: It was only the second time I'd played a bass guitar. I don't think you could reasonably call it playing.

Captain Sensible: Siouxsie was utterly useless. Appalling. They didn't deserve to be allowed anywhere near a stage. Most of the bands, even people like the Buzzcocks, knew three or four chords, but they didn't have a clue. As far as I could make out she was just this kid with loads of dosh from a well-to-do family. She was the only person I knew then who could afford to spend £200 a time on S&M outfits from Malcolm's shop in the King's Road.

Marco Perroni: We did a Velvet Underground thing for what seemed like hours. It was horrible. Sid was doing Mo Tucker. I was doing Sister Ray. I remember me and Sid looking at each other and we were fed up, so we just stopped.

Siouxsie Sioux: We were going to keep playing until we got thrown off, but we got bored before the audience did.

Steve Severin: When we came off, I knew. It's a very addictive drug, being onstage. We collapsed into being a band.

Ron Watts: I hardly saw any of the music because there was antagonism the whole day between the London and the Manchester punks. I had to break up at least three fights. It was an elitist thing. The London punks could see that their personal little scene was being invaded and they were losing control. It was awful because that wasn't what punk was about. The old bands had been elitist. The punks were supposed to be different.

Joe Strummer: The Clash were in the middle of this ludicrous Stalinist vibe where we decided it was uncool to talk to the audience. Inevitably we broke a string, so suddenly there's no music. Luckily, I always used to have a transistor radio with me because there were those cool pirate radio stations. We didn't have spare guitars, so I just switched on the radio and held it up to the mic. At the mixing desk, Dave Goodman was hip enough to put a delay on it and it happened to be a discussion about the bombs in Northern Ireland. It was pure luck, but it sounded absolutely brilliant. Apocalyptic.

Roger Armstrong (co-owner, Chiswick Records): I vividly remember one typically McLaren-type stunt that night. He had arranged for all his friends to bring along cameras with flash guns. Then, when the Pistols came onto the stage, he got them all to run up to the front of the stage and start shooting, so you had all these flashes going off, which made it look very impressive.

Punky mayhem: Chris Spedding (above), a late addition to the bill, "sided with the punks"; (opposite, clockwise from top right) The Clash's Paul Simonon in the middle of a "Stalinist vibe"; Stinky Toys' Elli "screeched incessantly"; Subway Sect "only knew five songs"; Dave Vanian was kicked offstage; and the Pistols's Steve Jones, before the 'pint incident'.

Steve Mick: The Pistols were fucking brilliant. They were really on form. There were kids on chairs, tables... No one in their right mind could say they couldn't play.

21 September

Upstaging Captain Sensible's spitting antics, Sid Vicious slings a glass. Hell breaks loose.

Eddie (drummer, The Vibrators): When we turned up there was no PA system. Luckily we'd played a gig at the Lord Nelson up in Holloway Road the night before, so we agreed to let them use our PA system. It was meant for little pub gigs, so it was really useless, too small for the 100 Club. All these other bands kept complaining that it was a crap PA, but if it wasn't for us they'd have had nothing.

Ron Watts: Chris Spedding [renowned guitarist] had been down the club to see a few punk bands play and he'd really enjoyed it. He sided with them, and asked me if he could be on the bill for the festival. He really wanted to be associated with it.

Eddie: Spedding showed up in the afternoon and said, Alright, so what's this gig I'm supposed to be playing? It was like he had seen an advert announcing he was playing but no one had told him anything about it. He was put together with us and we spent the rest of the afternoon and the evening in the dressing room learning the chords for his songs.

Captain Sensible: The Buzzcocks turned up with all their equipment in plastic Tesco bags. They had these Top 20 guitars which were, like, the cheapest thing you could possibly buy. Most of them only had four strings and they couldn't even tune them.

Pete Shelley: People like The Vibrators were already better established than us, so they got the use of a dressing room. We just had to dump our gear in a little alcove with seats that had been cordoned off. We had no road crew either, so we spent most of our time watching the gear to make sure nobody nicked it. There was a lot of talk that afternoon about the possibility that The Damned might get signed to Stiff Records. At one point, they were standing together examining the contract Stiff were offering them. Stinky Toys were good. Their singer screeched incessantly like Yoko Ono, which was fine. The more excessive you could be, obviously the more you were on the right track.

Knox (guitarist, The Vibrators): I had loaned the Stinky Toys guitarist my amp and speakers and he played so loud that he blew out the speaker cones. So we went on and sounded crap.

Captain Sensible: We really couldn't play very well at all, but we were better than any of the others. I spent most of my time standing at the front of the stage shrieking with laughter at the other bands, which didn't much amuse them.

Dave Berk (drummer, Johnny Moped and Damned roadie): The Captain had his hair bright mauve then. He had a habit of standing right at the back of the stage, playing but not moving at all. Then suddenly he would run forward and gob at the punters, which they took offence at but I think that's how it all started.

Captain Sensible: We always tried to upstage each other, so at one point I kicked Dave Vanian [Damned singer] and he went hurtling right off the front of the stage. It wasn't as bad as it sounds, because the stage was only two feet high, but that meant it was easy for the crowd to climb up and mob you. Anyway, he went off the stage and crashed right into Siouxsie.

Pete Shelley: A friend of ours eventually turned up, so we left him to look after our gear and went out to get a burger. As a result we missed the famous incident with the smashed glass.

Caroline Coon: I was standing up on a chair that I'd dropped against the back wall of the club, so I could see what was going on. I saw things being thrown and there was a commotion and I realised something was happening. I actually saw the glass shatter against the pillar and my impression was that it wasn't Sid who threw it.

Eddie: People started coming into the dressing room. There was one guy with his forehead gashed open and pouring blood. All we could do was wrap towels around his head. Then a girl came in with blood coming out of her eye. I thought, Christ, if this is what punk's about, you can shove it.

Caroline Coon: The ambulance came first and people were taken away, then the police Gestapoed in mob-handed and Sid looked the likeliest suspect so they started frog-marching him out.

Ron Watts: I'm certain it was Sid. He wasn't trying to hit the girl, obviously. He was just pissed off at The Damned, because he saw them as the main rivals to the Pistols, so he threw a pint tankard at the stage. Instead, though, it shattered on a pillar and glass went into this girl's eye. One of my barmen saw the whole thing very clearly, and told the police exactly what he'd seen. When the police tried to arrest Sid, there was immediately about 30 punks all saying it wasn't him.

Vivienne Westwood: It was a terrible, awful thing that happened. Sid threw that bottle, but we pretended to the police that it was someone else. But it was him that did it and he was arrested and put into some kind of young people's remand home. Sid didn't actually feel guilty about it, I think he'd managed to convince himself of his own innocence.

Caroline Coon: As soon as I saw how the police were treating him, I ran after them and asked what was happening and where they were taking him, which is everyone's right. They just told me to shut up because it had nothing to do with me.

PHOTOS: BARRY PLUMMER x6

TIME CAPSULE

While punk rock exploded in London, these events occurred...

4 September 1976
Abba secure their third UK Number One with Dancing Queen.

16 September
The ordination of women priests is approved by the US's Episcopalian Church.

23 September
The South African government permits multiracial teams to represent the country in international sports despite the ongoing segregation of sporting clubs.

28 September
Muhammad Ali beats Ken Norton to retain the world heavyweight title.

29 September
Britain applies to borrow $3.9b from International Monetary Fund to prop up the faltering pound.

"The Pistols were fucking brilliant. Kids were on chairs, tables..."

Steve Mick, Sniffin' Glue fanzine

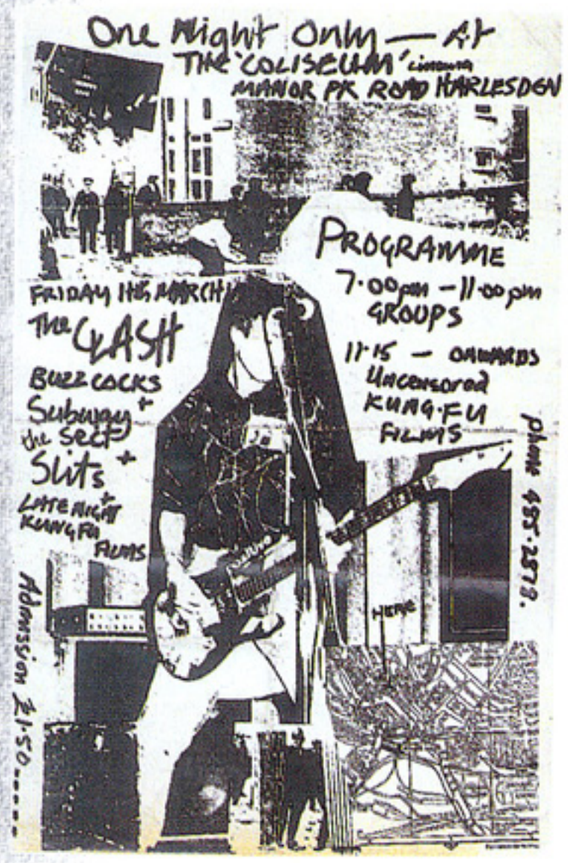
Class of '77

SUBWAY SECT

They opened the bill at the legendary 100 Club Punk Festival in 1976, but Vic Godard and his band were as uncategorisable as they were unique. By Lois Wilson.

THE FILE

Personnel: Vic Godard (vocals), Rob Simmons (guitar), Paul Myers (bass), Paul Packham (drums).
Hometown: London
Formed: 1976
The gameplan: To oppose all rock'n'roll. Godard: "I thought the Sex Pistols spelt the end for rock music, but unfortunately they didn't."
First gig: 20 September, 1976, The Punk Festival, 100 Club, London.
First record: Nobody's Scared, March 1978.
Biggest UK hit: Ambition (UK indie chart Number 1), December 1978.



When Vic Godard and his chums made their live debut in September 1976, opening for the Pistols at the 100 Club Punk Festival, they moved the musical goalposts so wide you needed a telescope to see them. Never mind the Pistols. Here was the quintessential punk rock group. For the Sect you really didn't need to be able to play an instrument to form a band – they didn't even own instruments, let alone play them when they started life just six months previously – and while their contemporaries shocked with their garishly bright uniforms, safety pins and swearing, the Sect in turn bemused the punks with their grey V-neck sweaters and singer Godard's stylish suit. The contrast was as spectacular as their five-song set: a seismic cacophony of sound that had the cognoscenti salivating, even if it left their lead singer unmoved. "We were awful, really dreadful," recalls an incredibly modest Godard.

The Subway Sect were actually punk's first manufactured boy band.

It was Pistols manager Malcolm McLaren who got the quartet – Godard, guitarist Rob Simmons, drummer Paul Packham and bassist Paul Myers – together. McLaren already knew Godard as he was a regular face at the Pistols' London gigs. "The first time I saw the Pistols I was walking past the Marquee and saw Malcolm McLaren in a hallway having an argument with the manager of the club. I recognised Malcolm and thought, That looks interesting, so I went inside. I'd never seen anything like it before. It was total chaos. The manager hated the Pistols and in between each song was trying to drag them off the stage. What appealed most to me were the lyrics Johnny Rotten was singing. They were completely overpowering. Before that it had just been bands like Dr Feelgood and the Count Bishops doing covers of Chuck Berry."

McLaren, desperate to catapult the Sex Pistols into the nation's consciousness, needed another band to bolster his punk festival's line-up. The soon-to-be Sect fitted the bill perfectly and the crowd's reaction on the night was such that an enthusiastic Bernie Rhodes, the colourful Clash svengali, phoned Vic that same week, offering to manage the group. He paid them a weekly wage of £15 each and provided rehearsal space at Rehearsal Rehearsals, The Clash's Chalk Farm studios and, later, a support slot on The Clash's White Riot tour.

Vic accepted and in the true spirit of punk – that is don't let musical ability get in the way of a brilliant idea – spent the next three years breaking free of the de rigueur three-chord blueprint to experiment with styles as diverse as swing, dinner jazz, northern soul and easy listening, all of which had little and, in most cases, no effect on the record-buying masses.

Perhaps the most shocking fact concerning Vic Godard And The Subway Sect is, that when you consider their sheer innovative genius and wayward nature, the quartet who hailed from Barnes, London, were actually punk's first manufactured boy band. For every original idea Godard put down in the studio, Rhodes would sneak in later and change it – more often than not, it has to be said, for the better. Take their amazing debut single Nobody's Scared on Rhodes's own Braik label. The single was two years in the making and it's one of punk's strangest offerings: an abrasive art-noise explosion of Godard's unique *Weltanschauung*.

"We were on our third drummer, Bob Ward by then," says Vic, "but Bernie didn't think we were good enough to put out a single before that."

Lyrically, he looked to Europe, mixing the alienation of Camus's L'Etranger with the dystopian vision of Jean Luc Godard's Alphaville. Musically, however, he was turning to the US for inspiration. "We wanted to sound like The Velvet Underground and Jonathan Richman And The Modern Lovers if they had been from England. We didn't succeed. In fact we sounded nothing like that." But Rhodes deemed the results not "punk" enough and decided to speed the master tapes up.

Then there was its follow-up, Ambition. Punctuated by the ping-ponging of table tennis balls and piloted by an eerie keyboard riff (both Rhodes's ideas), it's clear we're dealing with no ordinary group here. But if Vic had had his way, Ambition would never even have seen the light of day. "We thought Different Story, the single's B-side, was going to be the single instead. It was much better. And it wasn't even called that at the time. It was called Rock'N'Roll Even."

Despite Godard's protestations Ambition sold 20,000 copies, topped the indie chart and became a regular spin on the John Peel show. Its creator, it seems, was its only detractor. "I hated it. But Bernie had complete control at that time. He sent us off on tour then completely rearranged the track adding the synthesizer. I'm glad he did though, because now I hate it even more."

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Vic Godard
Having joined the GPO in 1986, Vic has since spent his mornings delivering letters, and his afternoons making music. In 1993 he released the excellent End Of The Surrey People album, produced by Edwyn Collins and featuring ex-Sex Pistol Paul Cook on drums. Since then he's played alongside The Long Decline and The Bitter Springs; while 2002 sees the release of Godard's follow-up to Surrey People, Sansend, and a musical, Blackpool, that he's been collaborating on with Irvine Welsh.

Rob Simmons
Since leaving the Sect in 1978, Rob passed a Humanities degree, took up a variety of part-time jobs including a Christmas postman, then joined the library service where he's remained for the last decade.

Paul Myers
Leaving the band in 1978 after appearing on the Subway Sect's first two singles and their aborted debut LP, Myers teamed up with The Professionals, a four-piece featuring Ray McVeigh and ex-Pistols, Steve Jones and Paul Cook and recorded I Didn't See It Coming in 1981. After two tours of the US the group disbanded and Myers went on to collaborate with McVeigh on various solo projects.

Paul Packham
Packham left the band at the end of 1976 – before the group recorded any material. Turning his back on music, he lost touch with his fellow band members. He now leads a relatively quiet life with his family.

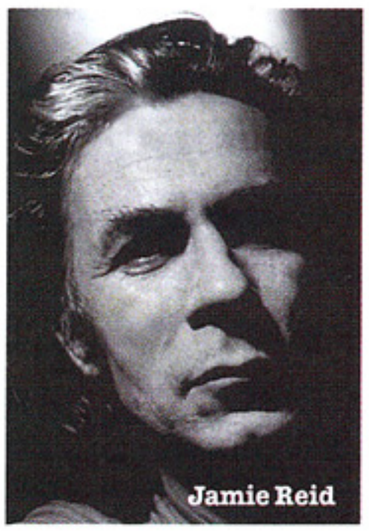
PHOTOS: LFI/CAROLINE COON/IAN DICKSON

"Is Vic there?"
He most certainly
was! May 1977.

JAMIE REID'S GRAPHICS

The Art Of Noise

He was the artist who virtually defined punk's cut'n'paste look. Jamie Reid tells Paul Stokes how the Druids, Situationists and being skint influenced him.


Jamie Reid

If one person can sensibly be credited with single-handedly influencing punk's look then it is artist Jamie Reid, Sex Pistols record sleeve designer and Malcolm McLaren's co-conspirator. However, almost appropriately, Reid's trajectory towards this leading role was unplanned and almost accidental.

"I loved football and I could have played professionally," he explains. However, a waning interest coupled with academic failure instead pushed the young Reid towards art school.

"I really blew it at school by the time I was 16," he recalls. "I was feeling very dissipated. I was always one of those kids who was drawing all day so I went to art school. You've got to remember then you could get into art school without any qualifications and get a grant."

Attending Croydon Art School in 1964, Reid, like many of his fellow students at the time, soon found events in Paris in 1968 a profound influence, galvanising his already strong political beliefs.

"I was one of those kids dragged along to the Aldermaston marches and my whole family was very involved in CND," explains Reid. "The politics was always there, it was always part of my life. So 1968 was a huge influence. It was that whole thing of wanting to take control of your own life."

Spurred on by their Parisian counterparts, the Croydon students staged their own sit-in, occupying college buildings for almost a month and allowing one of Reid's fellow students the opportunity to flex the organisational skills that would come in handy in 1976.

"Malcolm McLaren was sound," says Reid. "He was quite a catalyst." The pair then collaborated on a film project chronicling the history of London's Oxford Street, from the hangings of Tyburn to its role at the heart of commerce and consumerism.

With the influence of the Paris riots and Situationist slogans strong in his mind, Reid left art school in 1970 and established Suburban Press. This was an anarchist printing press in south London producing material that would form the foundation of the Sex Pistols' imagery.

"We were printing for all sorts of local groups, the women's movement, the black movement, squatting groups," explains Reid. "I was messing about with design, but because we had no money, I was cutting up newspapers and doing collage. It was from there that the look for punk came."

Reid's ideas and convictions were behind many of the images Suburban Press produced, revealing an unlikely inspiration for punk's strongest images.

"My family has always been very involved in Druidism," explains Reid. "It was definitely an influence that's always been there, it's probably manifested itself a lot more in later stuff I've done, but it has been there on the spiritual side."

Suburban Press was clearly carving out an influence, not least on McLaren, who, when establishing the Sex Pistols in 1975, contacted his former classmate.

"I'd actually gone to live on the Isle Of Lewis for a year, and while I was up there McLaren got in touch. He said to come and work with him in London on this project that he'd got. This turned out to be the Sex Pistols," explains Reid. "The Pistols were just the perfect marriage between the images I was creating and music really. It just gelled really well. I was blown away the first time I heard them. I thought it was very real at a time when music had become unreal. Plus, it linked with the printing press, there was this DIY aspect to it and the whole thing of encouraging people to do things for themselves."

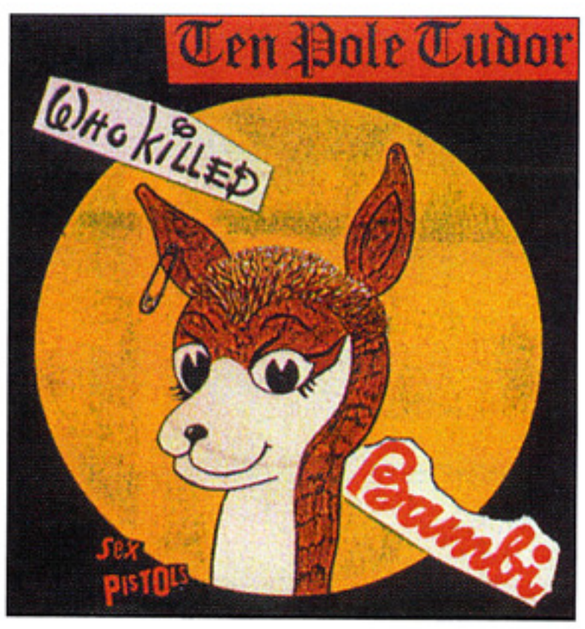
Initially designing posters and flyers for the band before moving on to record sleeves, Reid is keen that punk should not be saddled with an overly reverential status. "I think one of the things that's lost about punk is that there was a lot of humour to it and a lot of piss-take," he explains. "The imagery too is tinged with humour, and that's the danger of being retrospective about it. Punk was spontaneous, and as soon as you look back and talk about it that's lost on people."

Reid has gone on to work with other bands including Tenpole Tudor, Boy George and, most recently, Afro Celt Sound System as well as continuing his painting. Looking back, though, he concedes that the work with the Sex Pistols was a fantastic opportunity for an artist to get his ideas directly into the public consciousness.

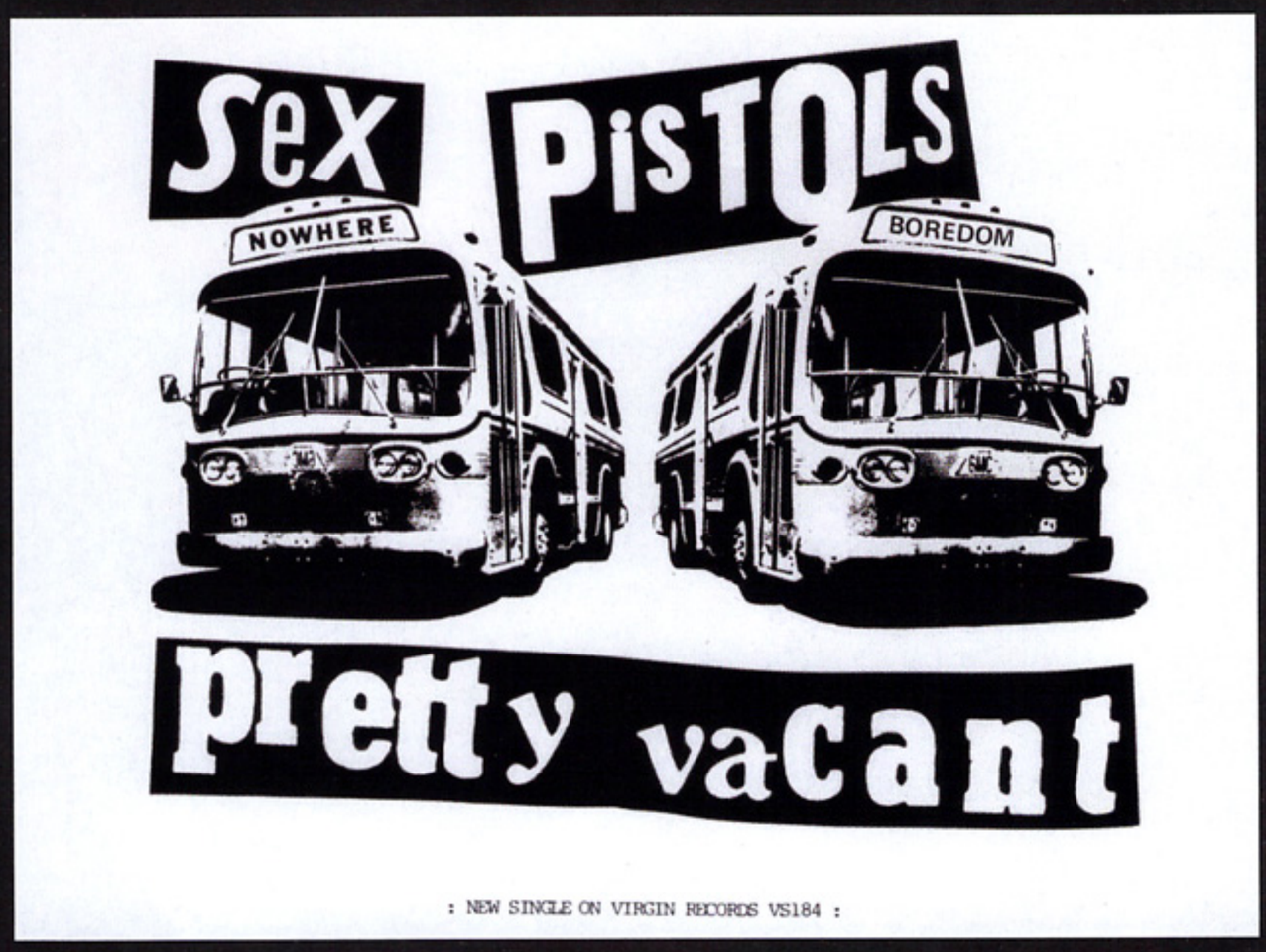
"It was great. It meant you could get stuff directly into the street and all over towns," he explains. "It was very immediate and direct. With God Save The Queen we got on the front page of The Daily Mirror within two weeks of coming out."

▶ SEX PISTOLS
God Save The Queen sleeve
"It was Cecil Beaton's official portrait which I cut straight out of The Sunday People. It was probably done a year before the record came out and was used on lots of handbills and flyers. It was one of a series of different images of the Queen's face and there were two I finally selected out of about 40. Did we get clearance from Beaton's people? No, we just did it."

▶ TENPOLE TUDOR / SEX PISTOLS
Who Killed Bambi sleeve
"Tenpole Tudor came to audition for The Great Rock'N'Roll Swindle, as it is in the film, and he was brilliant. I really like this one. It's so much an image to do with loss of innocence. It was a painted image that was about Disney's whole manipulation of the world. They're so tied in with American imperialism. You send in armies, you send in Disney and you send in McDonald's – it's culture rape."



▶ SEX PISTOLS
Anarchy In The UK poster
"Ray Stevenson [renowned punk photographer] did the contacts and I took it from there. It was an attempt to make the point about the declining empire, with the flag ripped up and then pinned together with safety pins. It's horrific, stamping on people's cultures wholesale – which is what America is doing now with a vengeance."



"We had no money, so I was cutting up papers and doing collage. That's where the look for punk came from."

▲ SEX PISTOLS
Pretty Vacant poster
"This actually came directly from when I was working on Suburban Press. The image was created in collaboration with a group of people in San Francisco called Point Blank. They'd made this unofficial timetable that was a complete replica of the San Francisco bus timetable, though their version is in different directions, the buses never connect and they weren't going anywhere. I think it's very appropriate for the song, but that was almost the point of the visuals to make what were, in some ways, very complicated ideas blatantly obvious and crystal clear."

▲ SEX PISTOLS
Holidays In The Sun
"I was just walking down Oxford Street when I passed a travel shop and saw a holiday brochure. It was just taking that, cutting it up and putting the song's lyrics in the bubbles. It was a pure act of plagiarism. To some extent it's probably the most Situationist sleeve I did, whatever Situationism might mean."

▲ SEX PISTOLS
Never Mind The Bollocks record sleeve
"We were really stuck on album titles, and I think it was at some sort of marketing meeting with Steve Jones and Paul Cook that Steve said, Fuck all this, never mind the bollocks, and I said, That's it. Ninety per cent of marketing I found a complete waste of time, but Virgin had a really good guy – a bit of an unsung hero called John Varnom – whose attitude was to get away with as much as we possibly could, which is pretty rare."

▲ SEX PISTOLS
Great Rock'N'Roll Swindle sleeve
"I wanted to get a lot into it, it's almost like you can see the film within the sleeve. There were an awful lot of slogans and stuff. We wanted to get in as much as possible on that sleeve. They even painted the image on to the side of a house. Did I have anything to do with that? Not really, only as much as I knew it was happening."

◀ PARACHUTE SHIRT
1977

"The shirts were old stock, the harnesses that resembled those on a parachute top were actually modelled on S&M leather straps, which I turned into canvas and cloth – again this stemmed from my desire to use outlawed designs and turn them into acceptable commodities. By looping the harness through the military shirt, the shirt then became a bondage shirt."

◀ DESTROY T-SHIRT
1977

"The slogan simply came out of one's own nihilistic trappings encouraged in the '60s with the student revolts and anarchist uprisings. I also wanted to demystify and deconstruct symbols such as the swastika. I'd buy Maoist, Republic of China badges and insignia, tourist trophies from Chinatown then mix these with fetish gear and Nazi regalia which I purchased from a shop run by '60s singer Chris Farlowe."

▶ TITS T-SHIRT
1976

"I took the image from a tourist souvenir T-shirt I had bought in America. We first sold the T-shirt in Sex but later reprinted it for Seditionaries where it was very popular."

"The clothes were a part of it, even before the music."

Paul Cook

▼ TWO COWBOYS
1977

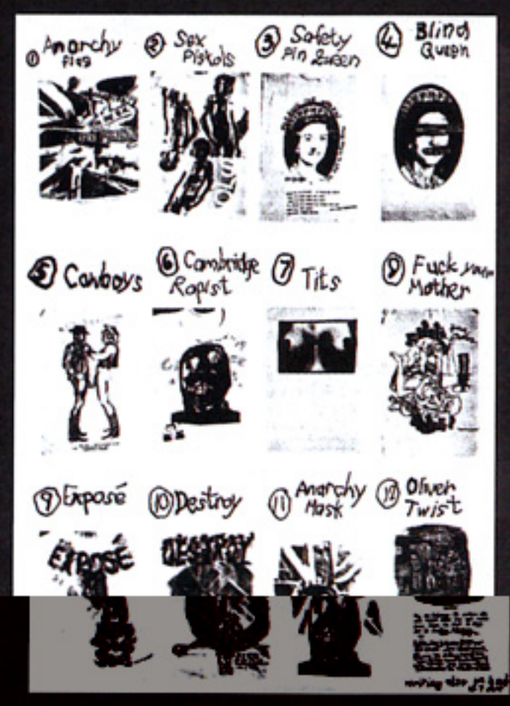
"I was intrigued by fetish clothing. I used to turn what was being worn in the seediest S&M clubs into ready-to-wear clothing for the street. I had a lot of fetish books and this print is drawn in the style of Tom Of Finland. A very sexy drawing, their penises are almost touching but not quite. It was one of our most popular items because it was so openly controversial. Alan Jones, our shop assistant, was arrested for wearing it, the T-shirts were confiscated by the police and Vivienne and I were charged with 'exposing to public view an indecent exhibition'."

▲ HANDKERCHIEFS
1977

"These stemmed from us wanting to be dandy highwaymen, foppish lads from the 18th century. We were simply taking items that could be bought in any haberdashery and making something extra special out of them."

▶ MAIL ORDER CATALOGUE
1977

"We attempted to run a mail order service but it wasn't that successful. It was mainly for the teddy boys. They'd all live out in the sticks, on the borders of Essex and they'd send in semi-literate want lists. We'd get hundreds of these a week, so in the end we thought it would be easier if we had a catalogue to send out. The sales would amount to 50 postal orders a week, usually for fluorescent socks."



SOME PRODUCT

SEDITIONARIES CLOTHES EMPORIUM

Tatty Threads!

Malcolm McLaren's controversial store Seditionaries subverted the fashion industry and now its wares are considered design classics. By Lois Wilson.

Malcolm McLaren

Before Malcolm McLaren set his sights on destroying the monarchy, he thought he'd have a go at subverting the fashion industry. The art school drop-out, Sex Pistols Svengali and brainchild behind Seditionaries, the controversial clothes emporium at 430 King's Road, Chelsea, claims the latter, "was the boldest statement I ever made, bolder than the Sex Pistols ever were."

Now, 26 years after it first opened its doors, its artefacts – T-shirts, handkerchiefs, parachute tops and muslin shirts, once the uniform of the outsider, the revolutionary and the outlaw – are commanding a price tag of £350-£500 at auction houses. Items which, in 1976, would have had you arrested for causing a breach of the peace, are now being cited as design classics.

Malcolm McLaren explains: "In 1971 the King's Road was a sea of victims. Children from the '60s wandering aimlessly around wearing the most ridiculous flower power clothes thinking Granny Takes A Trip was still the coolest thing happening. It was a field of glitterdom. I wanted the exact opposite. I wanted to create an oasis."

Asking his then girlfriend Vivienne Westwood to help, "at that time she was a primary school teacher and aghast at what I wanted to do", Malcolm opened Let It Rock in 1971, a tiny but quite extraordinary clothes shop that sold items from a bygone era – "I felt the '50s were a more authentic decade to the one we had just come out of so we sold teddy boy drape jackets, zoot suits and crepe soled shoes." Commissioned to design costumes for both Ray Connolly's That'll Be The Day and Ken Russell's Mahler, it wasn't long before McLaren found himself in the limelight as Let It Rock was invited to exhibit designs at the National Boutique show at New York's MacAlpin Hotel.

"We went but I felt we'd become too successful so we closed the shop down," explains McLaren. "We redecorated, restocked and reopened with a new name and a new mission." Hence Too Fast To Live Too Young To Die in 1973, Sex in 1974 and Seditionaries in 1976. Which is when Malcolm came of age, became a true seditionary, the rebel he'd dreamt of being.

"We didn't recognise the fashion industry and its values. We were its nemesis. An outsider generation attached itself to Seditionaries. It became a place to be seen. At the same time the celebrated on the King's Road – the Stones, the Faces, the Ringo Starrs and the David Bowies – were excluded, too scared to enter a world they didn't understand or fit into."

Looking back on his and Westwood's designs, primarily vehicles for their outrage at what they saw to be an ultimately straight and conservative society, McLaren can't understand what all the fuss was about. "It was only art," he laughs. But art that became the blueprint for punk itself, encapsulating perfectly that DIY amateurism, naïve charm and the ability to shock and disgust that would soon spur on numerous future three-chord wonders to pick up their guitars and play.

Pistols drummer Paul Cook explains: "We used to shop in Malcolm's shop before we even had the idea of forming a band. The clothes were a part of it as far as we were concerned, even before the music."

The clothes themselves were handmade, says McLaren: "We'd take brand new T-shirts, make them look old, stamp on them, throw them around the garden and the estate, cut them up, dye them the grungiest colours so they went from being clean white to dirty grey. We'd turn them into wild animals. Taking up to three days to make, they would sell for £20 each, an extortionate price in those days. But it wasn't about the money, after all, that wouldn't cover two people working for three days.

"I remember Anita Pallenberg coming in one day. She'd bought a very nice shirt, taken it home and Keith Richards had hated it. She was ever so sorry and asked for a refund. I thought Keith Richards was an idiot but deep down I was pleased that I had my shirt back. After all, it was an expression of myself. My artistic statement to the world."

Fashion victims: Johnny and Paul show off their clobber.

PHOTOS: RAY STEVENSON, REX

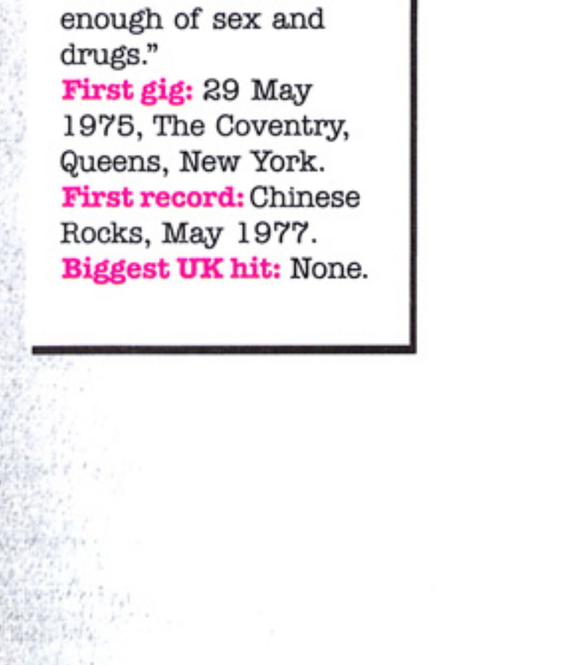
Class of '77

THE HEARTBREAKERS

They came close to making it but a combination of hard drugs and bad luck kept The Heartbreakers' career short and not-so sweet. By Malu Halasa.

THE FILE

Personnel: Johnny Thunders (vocals/guitar), Walter Lure (guitar), Richard Hell (bass), Billy Rath (bass), Jerry Nolan (drums).
Hometown: New York City
Formed: 1975
The gameplan: According to scenester Legs McNeil: "Everyone wanted more of life. We couldn't get enough of sex and drugs."
First gig: 29 May 1975, The Coventry, Queens, New York.
First record: Chinese Rocks, May 1977.
Biggest UK hit: None.


Walter Lure: er, breaking hearts.

At least Max's Kansas City didn't smell like dog shit – like CBGB's. Sweat, stale alcohol, fag ends, junkie sweetness and sickness wafted down the stairs from the first floor, where the stage was. Backstage, there was always a commotion. The Heartbreakers' guitarist Johnny Thunders didn't make a habit of being unconscious on the dressing-room floor, but sometimes it happened. "He would be completely comatose, with bubbles coming out of his mouth. You couldn't wake him, so a couple of times they tried to shoot speed into him," recalls the group's guitarist Walter Lure.

"We thought we were so cool because we had graduated on to heroin." Walter Lure

Waiting until the very last minute, The Heartbreakers went onstage sans Thunders. By the end of the first song, he always crawled through the crowd towards them. Sometimes his playing was mesmerising. Other times, he couldn't see his guitar through his self-inflicted fog of heroin, so the band unplugged his amp.

In 1975, Thunders and drummer Jerry Nolan, ex-New York Dolls, asked Television's bassist Richard Hell to leave his band and join The Heartbreakers. Their sound was mean, loud and abrasive, a cross between black drug humour and, when Hell was still a member, a gritty romanticism. He soon departed to form The Void-oids and was replaced by Billy Rath, a bass player who had been a gigolo in Florida.

In songs Born To Lose, Too Much Junkie Business and Do You Love Me, The Heartbreakers celebrated low and high life, alongside a pop staple – teen romance. Their best-known anthem, Chinese Rocks, had been co-written by Dee Dee Ramone and Hell. The Heartbreakers claimed provenance over the song because, according to Lure, Nolan used a Buddy Holly drum beat with the tom toms going through the chorus. Nolan had arcane rock knowledge. He traded the band's ripped look for thin '50s suits, and, in 1976, they could have passed for doo wop crooners. They were extremely popular live, yet record companies shunned them.

Salvation came from Malcolm McLaren who asked The Heartbreakers to support the Sex Pistols on the '76 Anarchy tour. The band arrived at Heathrow on the evening of the filming of Bill Grundy's Today programme for Thames Television. The next day, Nolan woke up the band with the morning papers. "To us," remembers Lure, "it was the sickest thing. Back home you say, Fuck, and they bleep it out. In England, they're smashing their TVs and parading in front of the House of Commons. Talk about over-reaction."

The Heartbreakers also weren't impressed with the Sex Pistols. "They were taking LSD and speed, but we thought we were so cool because we had graduated to heroin," says Lure.

On 1 December, 1976, the tour began. With only three of the 19 dates not cancelled, it ended 21 days later. Thunders described the shows to his biographer Nina Antonia in her book, In Cold Blood: "There were people outside singing Christmas carols. There were more of them outside than in the gigs. In Cardiff they even had these priests with microphones screaming out, The Devil's music is in there!"

Unlike the Bowery, where punk was decidedly underground, in the UK it had gone full-frontal mainstream, with money and deals on offer. In 1977, The Heartbreakers were signed by Track Records, The Who's former label which eventually went bankrupt. Nothing's more bittersweet than near success. "It might have been different if we had a record that sold a lot," says Lure looking back. Their debut album LAMF (Like A Mother Fucker) was fraught with production mishaps. The songs were well recorded, but the result on vinyl was muffled. Remixing didn't help and a deadline for an October, 1977, release loomed. Lure remembers: "Even Jerry remixed LAMF a few times and then he said, If that version comes out, I'm quitting, which he ended up doing. People still blame the mix today, but to me it was the Devil. The sound that we were after was the Pistols'."

The Heartbreakers played more gigs but the damage was already done. By November, Nolan left to form The Idols. Later, Lure and Rath returned to New York. Thunders stayed in the UK and launched a solo career. In 1986, he visited Lure in the US with a copy of LAMF Revisited released on Freud Records. It sounded like the original recordings, but the party had moved on. In 1991, Thunders OD'd in a hotel in New Orleans. Nolan followed a year later, but as his partner in music and crime once sang, You Can't Put Your Arms Around A Memory.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Johnny Thunders
After The Heartbreakers, Thunder's solo album, So Alone (1978) included Sex Pistols Paul Cook and Steve Jones, Pretender Chrissie Hynde, and Only One and Thin Lizzy members. Thunders also formed The Living Dead with Sid Vicious right before he died. In 1979, The Heartbreakers reformed, sans Nolan, and broke up a year later when Thunders joined Gang War with ex-MC5 guitarist, Wayne Kramer. Thunders was 38 when he was found dead in a New Orleans hotel.

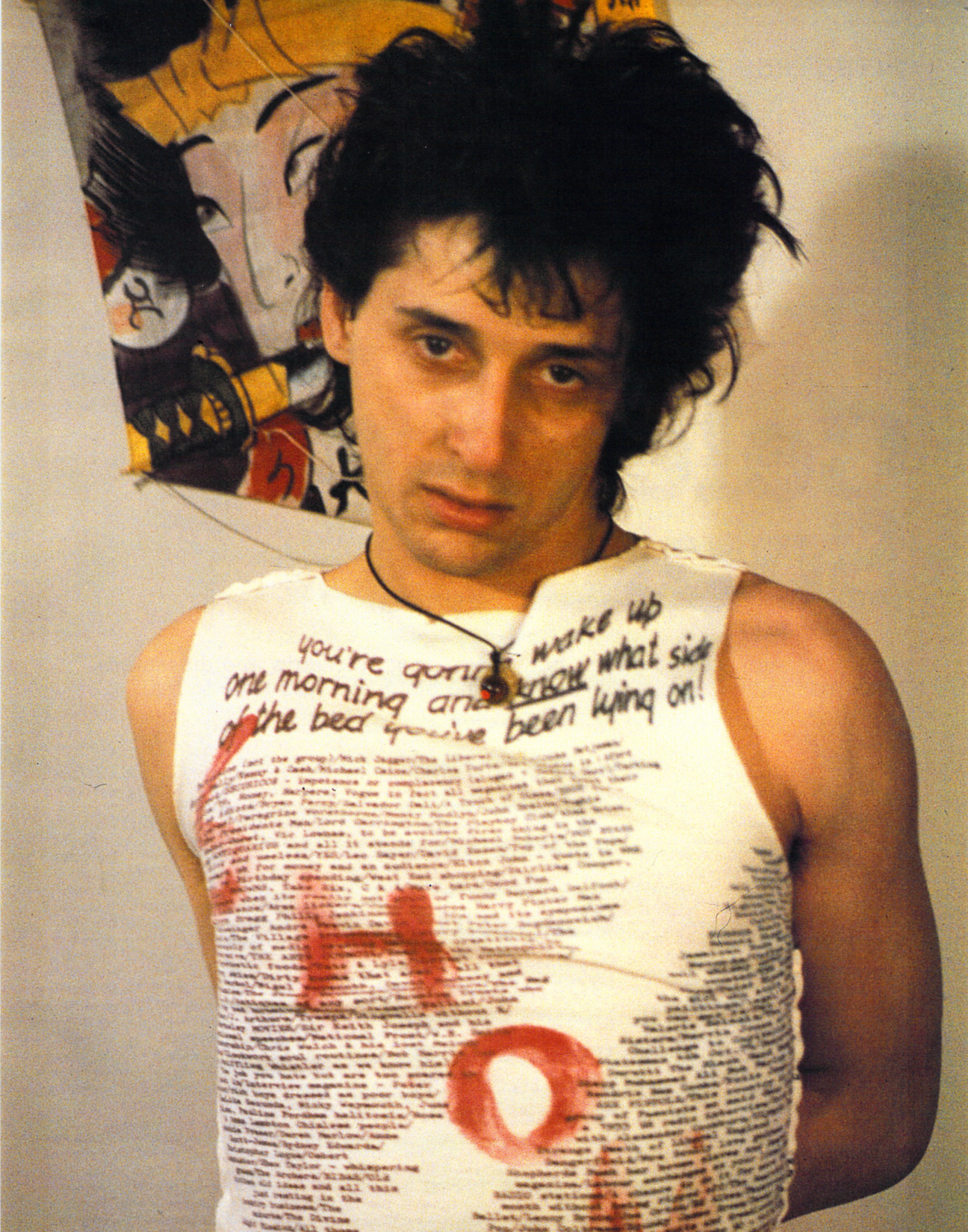
Jerry Nolan
After the botched production of LAMF, Nolan started working with The Idols, ex-New York Doll Arthur Kane and Steve Dior. Sid Vicious was living with him at the time of his death. Nolan, 45, died in 1992, in New York. He and Thunders are buried near each other in a Queens cemetery.

Richard Hell
Hell went on to form The Void-oids. His first novel, Go Now, was published in 1996. His current book, Hot And Cold, covers 30 years of writing. He is finishing a second novel.

Walter Lure
Lure kept his job as a chemist throughout The Heartbreakers' short career. He returned to Brooklyn in 1978, played in an assortment of bands, including recording with The Ramones. Eventually he became an investment banker. Lure still plays out regularly, and if his band members don't die on him, he has a pretty good time.

Billy Rath
Last heard from in the mid '90s, Rath gave up the bass for Christianity. Apparently he was living in a religious commune, completing a PHD in Theology.

PHOTOS: STAR FILE PHOTO/REDFERNS/RAY STEVENSON



Johnny too bad: Thunders in 1977.

Celebrity Squares

Punk was supposed to put an end to the prog dinosaurs and dissenters. But, finds Toby Manning, in the end, the old guard had little to fear.

"At one point the Sex Pistols were going to kill Elton John," recalls Keith Emerson, of '70s rock gods Emerson, Lake & Palmer. "I remember thinking, If they're gonna kill him, we better look to ourselves. Don't shoot me, I'm only the piano player!" The arrival of punk spelt the end for bloated '70s superstars, the ice age that would deliver the dinosaurs' extinction. Proggers and purveyors of MOR pap panicked, winning a pyrrhic victory at A&M in getting the Sex Pistols dropped, while dinosaur DJs like Bob Harris and Tony Blackburn deliberately deprived punk of the oxygen of airplay, before all were swept away as if they never existed.

Well, that's how the story goes anyway. Like most great stories, the reality of the great punk clean-out wasn't quite so clear-cut. Initially, insulated by American success, sunny tax exile or a cocaine-induced complacency, most of the UK dinosaurs' careers continued unabated. "Punk rock?" asked Mike Oldfield from his mansion, in 1977. "I've never heard of it". While Elton John was too busy threatening his own life and career to be aware of any outside threat, Rod Stewart was still at the top of the UK charts. Even if it was a political decision to keep the Sex Pistols off the top. What's more, the biggest selling single of punk's breakthrough year – for a while the biggest selling single of all time – was Wings' Mull Of Kintyre. If rock aristocracy the Stones, The Who and Led Zeppelin were feeling threatened, they covered it well, and, in Pete Townshend and Jimmy Page's case, shows of buddy-buddy bonhomie towards the young upstarts.

Even punk's polar opposite, prog rock enjoyed its most conspicuous commercial success at punk's peak. Yes hit the Top Ten with Wondrous Stories, Genesis would pursue them the next year with Follow You Follow Me, while Emerson, Lake & Palmer's Fanfare For The Common Man hit the charts the same day as God Save The Queen – 4 June 1977.

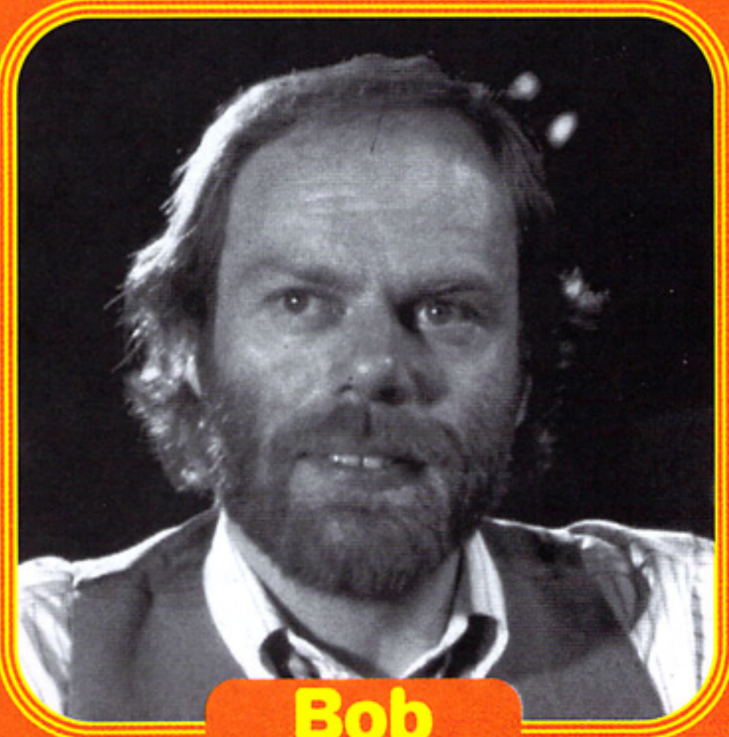
Punk spelt the end for bloated '70s superstars, the ice age that would deliver the dinosaurs' extinction.

"ELP were busy with our biggest ever tour around the States at the time," says Keith Emerson today, "so we didn't feel we had much to fear. It certainly didn't feel like our audience was deserting us. I remember reading all the stories about the Sex Pistols and thinking, Well, that's nothing, ELP are much more decadent. Carl [Palmer] and I used to spit at each other onstage just for a laugh."

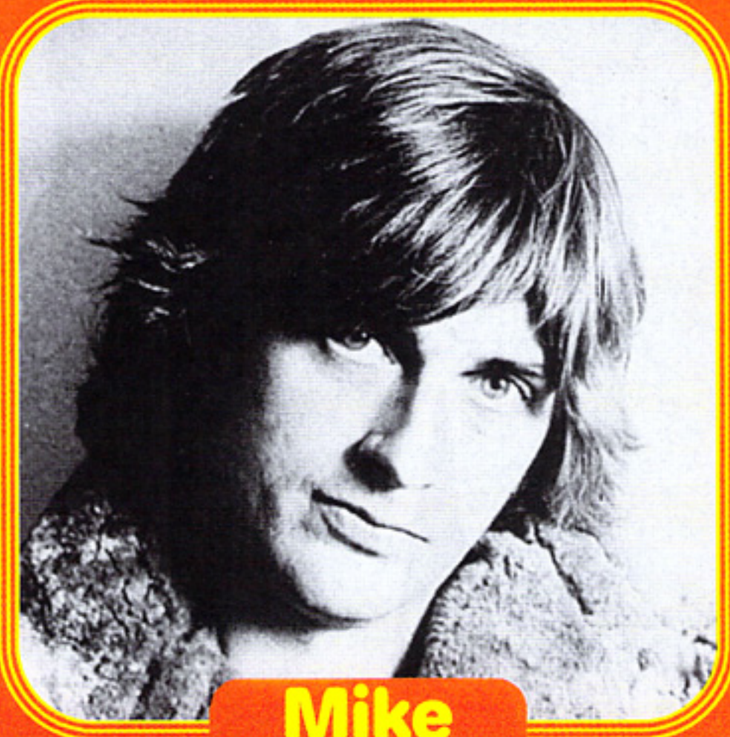
Despite Steve Jones's customised 'I Hate Pink Floyd' T-shirt, the Floyd's Dave Gilmour remains similarly - if snootily - insouciant. "I thought it was quite lively at the time. It wasn't the first time it happened. I mean people being incredibly rude and playing music incredibly badly and being incredibly obnoxious has always been a teenage thing." Or in bandmate Roger Waters' case, a 30-something thing.

Indeed the pantomime villain of the prog-punk stand-off, Rick Wakeman – the man who is credited with persuading A&M to drop the Pistols – claims he was utterly untroubled by punk. "In Yes we were well aware of the Sex Pistols," he says now, "and aware as well that punk had a strong anti-music establishment movement within it. But if you're a musician, you love revolutions, because that's what keeps the whole thing fresh. When something new happens it's extremes, and then they mellow into the norm."

Rick Wakeman was recording a solo LP in his Swiss tax exile when the A&M story broke. The first he knew of his supposed role was when a British visitor showed him a copy of that day's Evening Standard. The article said A&M claimed Richard Carpenter and Wakeman had both threatened to leave the label if the Pistols stayed. "I went apeshit," Wakeman says today, "it made no difference to me whether A&M wanted to sign Sooty or the Queen herself, as long as they kept putting my records out."



Bob



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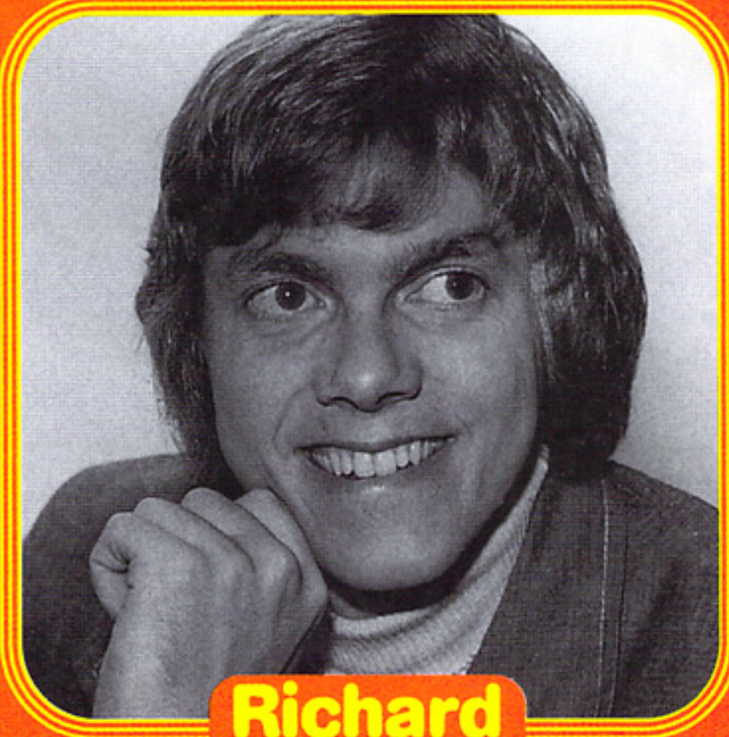

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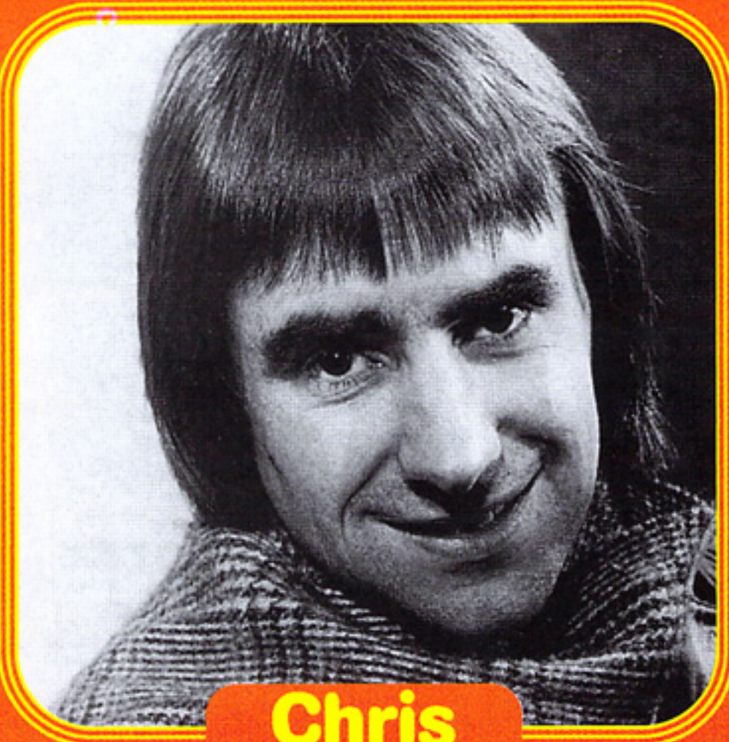

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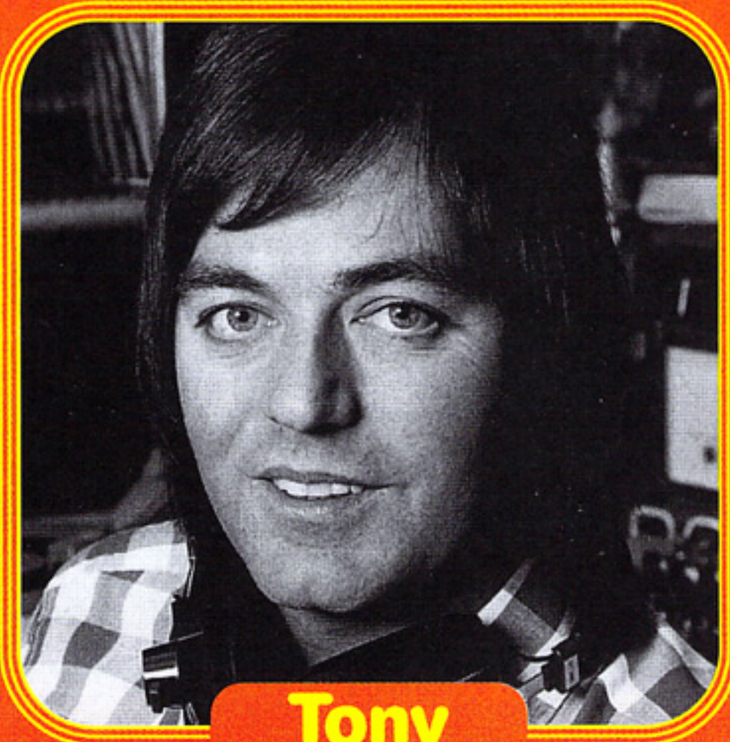

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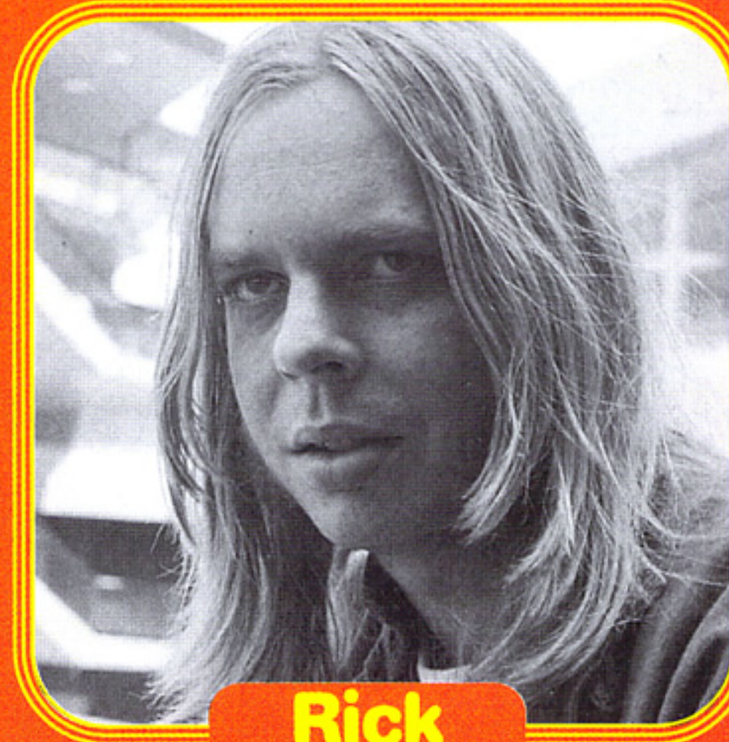

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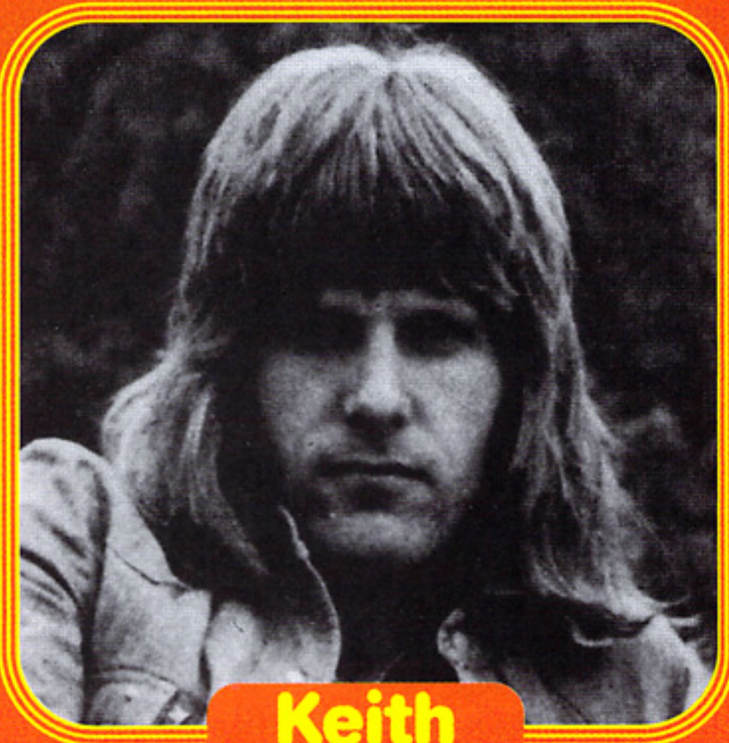
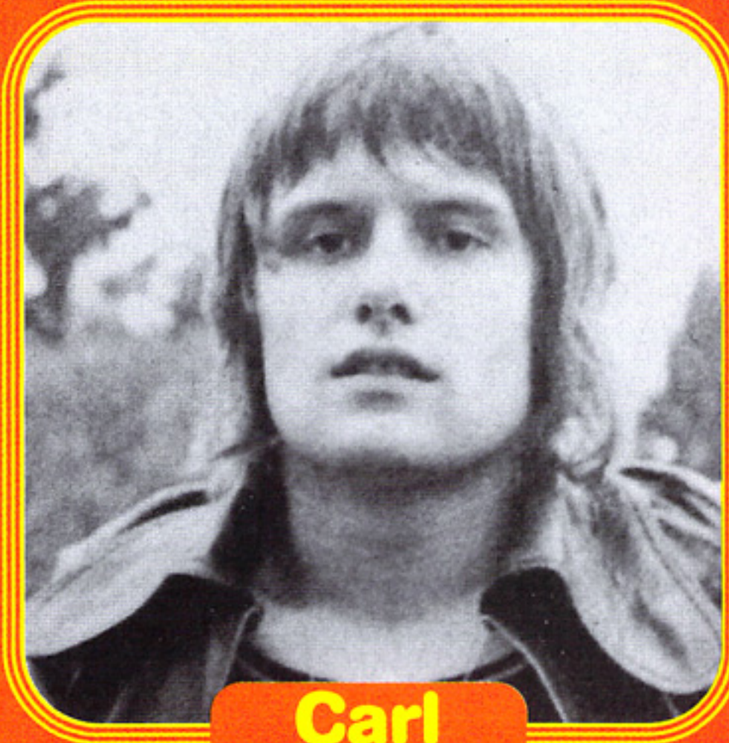
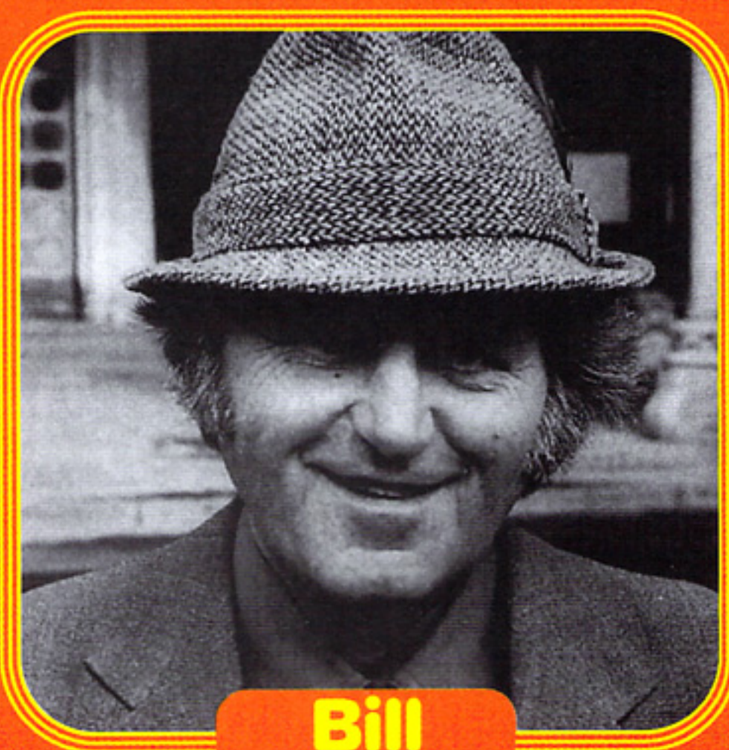


Keith

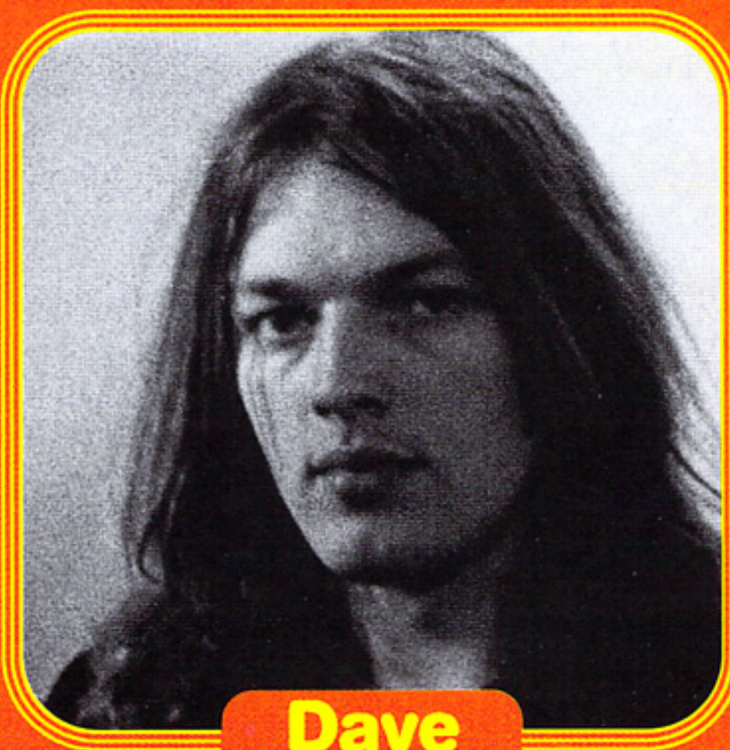
Greg



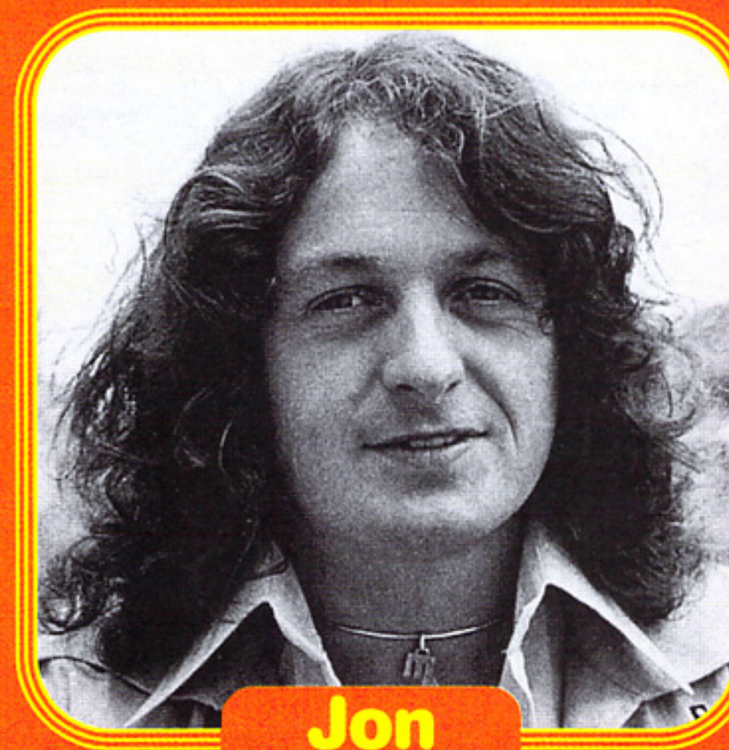
Carl



Bill



Dave



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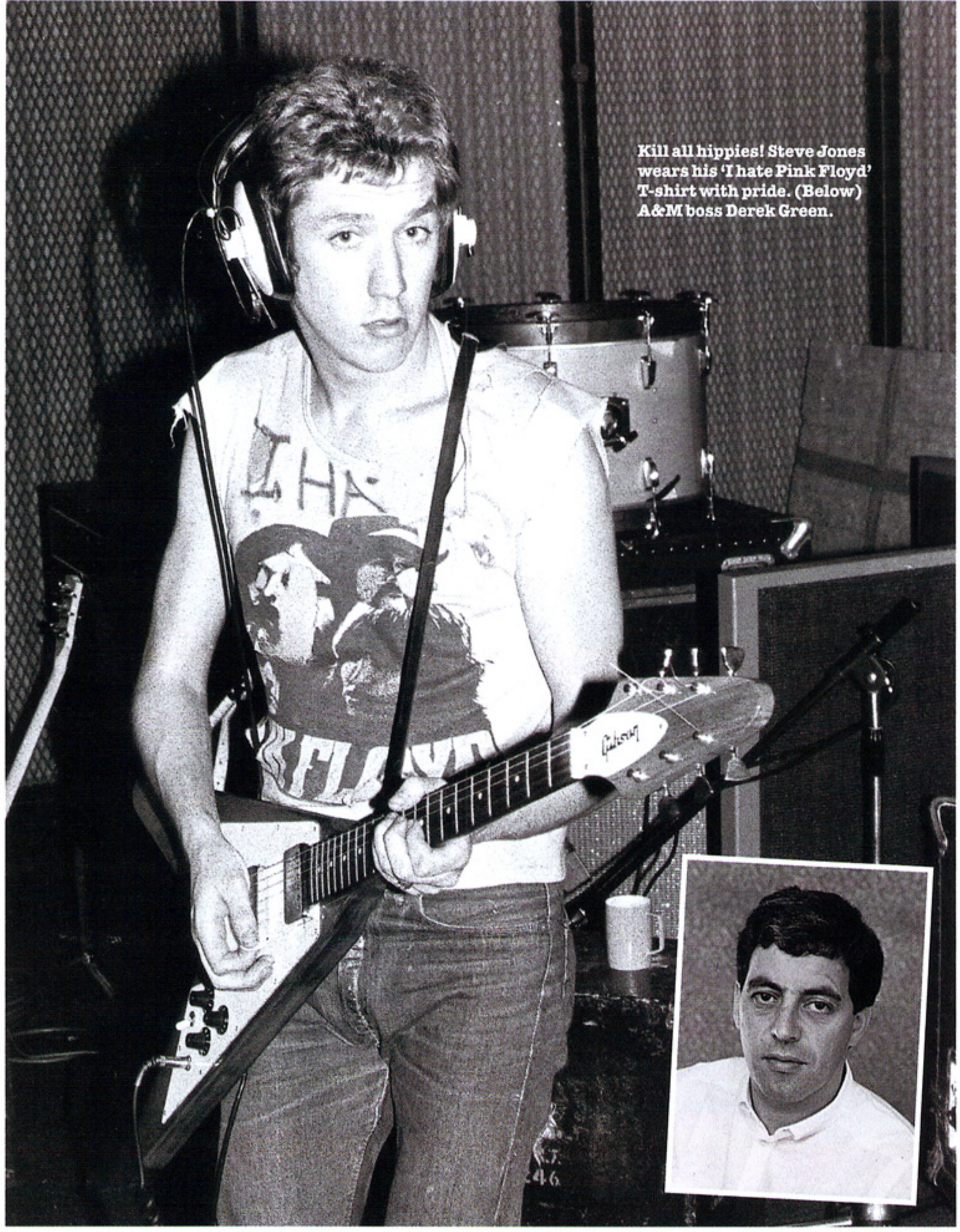


Kill all hippies! Steve Jones wears his 'I hate Pink Floyd' T-shirt with pride. (Below) A&M boss Derek Green.

Wakeman immediately rang A&M but UK boss Derek Green was "unavailable", having taken a six-month sabbatical after sacking the Sex Pistols. "I felt like I'd been made a scapegoat. A&M wanted out and I was perfect – I was a key figure in progressive rock, I was living a thousand miles away, literally and figuratively out of touch. What really upset me was that it made me look like an out of touch fart, and that's something that's stuck." Wakeman left the company shortly afterwards.

Is Wakeman merely indulging in historical revisionism here? Kit Buckler was A&M press officer at the time. "The conversation I had was that there were artists that were complaining and Rick was one of them. Maybe Rick is a different person now than he was then. Equally, maybe Herb and Jerry [company founders Alpert and Moss] felt comfortable with using the artists as camouflage. Maybe names were plucked out of the air."

Derek Green offers an entirely different version of events. "Richard Carpenter? Come on! That would be so beneath his interest level. The Americans in general didn't give a flying fuck about punk. But Rick Wakeman wasn't a factor either. What happened was Malcolm [McLaren] read a jokey telex from Rick on my desk upside down and immediately grabbed at it. It was Rick being tongue-in-cheek going 'What you doing signing a punk act?' or something. It's not fair that he's been labelled with that. If anything, Rick was a lot more dangerous than your average punk! Of course, to this day John Lydon sincerely believes that Rick Wakeman got him dropped. The fact is it's simply not true."

Contradicting Buckler's assertion of American interference, Green claims Alpert and Moss left the decision entirely to him, and that it was his own loss of nerve following an incident-filled week that led to the termination of the Pistol's contract. First there was the trashing of the A&M offices after the Buckingham Palace signing "which upset an already disgruntled staff. We were a songwriter and musician-based label. A lot of the staff felt we'd signed a band who weren't musical." Green goes on, "I particularly didn't like the incident with Bob Harris at the Speakeasy. That really bugged me."

The 'Speakeasy incident' was another crucial drawing of battle lines. 'Whispering' Bob Harris was seen as a representative of the musical establishment. Not only did the Radio 1 disc jockey champion progressive rock and sensitive singer-songwriters; he ran the BBC's flagship adult music programme the Old Grey Whistle Test. "You had to have an LP out to be on the show," Harris explains now. "So the Pistols, The Clash and The Damned didn't qualify. It was the other end of the spectrum to Top Of The Pops. So all this punk music was going on around us and we weren't playing it. The perception was we were anti-punk and in me they found their perfect anti-hero, their coconut on the shy. Ex-hippy, long hair, 30 years old. It was their stance towards me that defined the situation rather than the other way round!"

Following a clash with The Clash the previous week, returning from a late-night recording session with his engineer, Harris dropped in at the Speakeasy in the West End. The same place the Pistols also happened to be celebrating their A&M deal. Harris was hassled by John Wardle (later PiL's Jah Wobble) about not playing the Pistols and a fracas ensued that resulted in the pair spending the night at A&E, Harris's engineer requiring 14 stitches.

"Punk makes me ashamed of the pop world. It's a disgraceful fad that won't last."
Tony Blackburn

"I felt very depressed," recalls Harris. "This had nothing to do with what I'd got into music for. I just couldn't understand. I thought it was negative and nihilistic. It polarised the two contingents. I didn't want to be a part of it. We probably would have eventually had the Sex Pistols on the show if that hadn't happened." Hatches were battened. Harris's Capitol colleague Aidan Day stripped the Sex Pistols off the playlist; A&M – closely connected with Harris – went into freefall.

Kit Buckler recalls: "All of a sudden there was a conspiracy – oh my goodness, we'll never get on the Old Grey Whistle Test again. We're going to be ostracised! Nothing like this had ever happened – it completely threw the whole normality of the way the record companies dealt with the media."

Green continues, "I went home that weekend and sat down in my Rolls Royce and I thought, I'm bullshitting here – I'm living a middle-class life, I've got three kids. Do I really think this stuff is that great that I want to have to deal with all of this?" The Sex Pistols were out.

The other great A&M myth is that of the artists' petition – stating "there is life after the Sex Pistols" – that influenced Green's decision. "There never was a petition from the artists," states Green. "Chris De Burgh did write me a letter, but it was a personal letter of support after I'd fired the Pistols. You can tell from the wording – that was him saying to me personally there's life after the Sex Pistols, don't give up." Interestingly, these days even De Burgh puts a more pro-active spin on it, saying recently, "I thought [Green] was making a dreadful blunder signing the Sex Pistols. It was just a short letter saying, 'Good luck to you in what you do. I just want you to know that I've spoken to a number of other artists on the label… and we all feel that [the Sex Pistols] have as much to do with this record label as I have a chance to go to the moon', or something like that." After that, recalls Kit Buckler, "things got very boring at A&M. It was suddenly back to Peter Frampton and Supertramp."

The dinosaurs were not dead then, but they were starting to feel a distinct chill in the air. The climate was definitely changing. Stewart and the Stones secured their chart dominance with the help of disco; Mike Oldfield, Genesis and erstwhile col-

league Peter Gabriel optimistically pursued pop in place of pomp. Genesis's erstwhile prog colleagues however were in real trouble.

Despite dwindling sales for 1977's Works II album and contract-filler Love Beach, Keith Emerson bullishly insists ELP's dissolution came from inside rather than outside. "Punk didn't destroy ELP – we just moved in different directions." Greg Lake sees it differently. "Punk was the end of honest rock'n'roll," he has said, repeatedly. "In the late '70s the record industry was searching for some other way to sell records. They really invented, divisively, punk and brought that whole movement through. And, of course, they've been struggling with different tags and definitions ever since."

By 1979, Yes had also fallen apart. "There was a time when the only question anyone wanted to ask was 'What do you think about punk?' and it was very hard to answer," said Jon Anderson at the time. "Of course they *hated* us." He sounded more hurt than angry at his new pariah status. "I didn't feel resentment. There was just a bit of confusion, you know, 'Why are they knocking us?' We were a supergroup, yeah, but we were still working really hard. We were still learning, looking for new ideas, new ways of presentation…"

Says Bob Harris, "What was strange and rather disconcerting was the way everyone abandoned ship on you. It was interesting to read the press stuff about me just pre and just post. The tone had changed totally." Even more strikingly, Harris's colleague Tony Blackburn had once crowed, "[Punk] is disgraceful and makes me ashamed of the pop world, but it is a fad that won't last." In fact it was Blackburn who wouldn't last, sacked from Radio 1 for – among other crimes – talking in moronic faux Cockney across Sham 69's Hurry Up Harry.

However, it was Anderson's former colleague Rick Wakeman who was affected worst of all. "Punk made the climate a lot harder for progressive musicians," he says. "It was tough. Record companies got frightened of having anything in that genre. When suddenly your income disappears when you've got a business your running costs carry on. At one stage it got so bad I lived on a bench in Hyde Park for three weeks. I remember one time the police coming round, they woke me up and they said, Hey Rick, c'mon, get home – your missus will be going potty! I didn't have the heart to tell them the truth. So I got up, walked around the block and 20 minutes later got back on the bench again!"

"The irony of all this is Lydon now lives in LA near me. I always look out for his limo!"
Keith Emerson

With the benefit of hindsight, punk's year zero, anti-music establishment ethos was as much sabre-rattling as substance. Despite the punks' snootiness towards Glen Matlock's Beatles fixation and The Jam being "'60s throwbacks" (Sniffin' Glue), The Great Rock'n'roll Swindle revived the Pistols' early covers of Small Faces and Who numbers. What's more, Lydon was already known as a fan of Peter Hamill's arch prog outfit Van Der Graaf Generator. His PiL colleague, Keith Levene, moreover had honed his guitar style on Steve Howe's guitars as a Yes roadie, while the Buzzocks' Howard Devoto has recently admitted to having been an admirer of progressive rock stalwarts Yes and Pink Floyd.

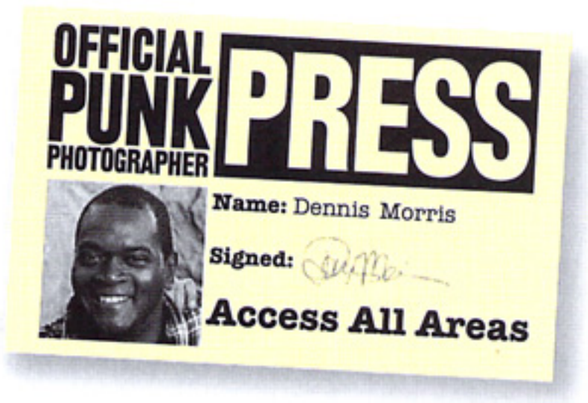
Perhaps the most telling comment comes from another secret prog fan, The Damned's Captain Sensible: "We thought, We'll be out on our ear'oles when Yes and Genesis get back. Little did we know that we could make a poncey career out of it!" In fact, careers soon took over. Punk's successor quickly ditched its ideals but utilised its propensity for generating publicity to create a whole new kind of dinosaur. As Bob Harris says: "What happened to punk changing the world? Sure enough, five years later we've got Duran Duran! It didn't go anywhere. Punk never meant anything in the States anyway. Over there they just called it 'parochial whining!'"

The '80s was a return to even more lumbering dinosaur values – hotels, limos, massive recording budgets and models all conspicuously consumed in the full glare of publicity. Meanwhile, a reborn progressive rock – in the shape of Asia, a reinvented Genesis and Yes, and the pop productions of ex-Yes man Trevor Horn – provided a suitably bombastic soundtrack.

With The Rolling Stones still going strong, both Elton John and Chris De Burgh would go on to even greater success in the 1980s. "I think the amount of punk that has survived as music is negligible," De Burgh said recently. "But it did allow bands like The Police to come through with genuine talent on the back of it. I think the Sex Pistols are highly relevant as a sociological phenomenon, but not much else."

Keith Emerson remembers: "I ran into the Sex Pistols in the World's End pub in the King's Road back in 1977, near Vivienne Westwood's place. I sensed a lot of snickering going on when I got off my Norton. The irony of all this, though, is that John Lydon now lives in Los Angeles about 10 blocks from me. I'm always looking out for his limo!"

Turning rebellion into money: the Sex Pistols (from left) Matlcock, Jones, Cook and Lydon at the Filthy Lucre tour press conference, 100 Club, London, 1996.



STRIFE THRU A LENS

Punk lensman Dennis Morris tells Lois Wilson how he fought against prejudice to become one of the Sex Pistols' most exciting documentarians.

It's no surprise that Johnny Rotten personally sought out the services of photographer Dennis Morris. Not only did he have the snap-happy skill – Dennis had his first photo printed on the front page of the Daily Mirror at the tender age of 11 and captured Bob Marley at the Speakeasy club aged just 14 – but more importantly he had the attitude. "Punk was a real cultural and artistic revolution. There had been nothing like it before and there's been nothing like it since. It allowed people like me to realise we had the potential to do anything we wanted and become anything we wanted. I don't know why it happened when it did, but I'm glad it did," he says.

From day one Dennis wanted to be a lensman. "I was a choir boy at St Mark's Church in Hackney. Their patron Donald Patterson – of Patterson photographic equipment – ran a film club there. I wandered into the dark room, saw this blank piece of paper turn into a picture and knew that this was it for me. My career was sorted. Mr Patterson saw my potential and took me under his wing at a time when it was literally, as Johnny Rotten said, no Irish, no blacks, no dogs."

Something that Dennis sadly had to witness first hand. "Just before I left school I had to visit the careers officer," he recalls. "He told me straight there was no way I could become a photographer. He said there *were* no black photographers. I almost believed him because I couldn't get a job for awhile but then Johnny [Rotten] came knocking at my door."

Taking his inspiration from lensmen Henri Cartier-Bresson and Don McCullin, Dennis's reportage photojournalistic style captured the explosive nature of punk and the Sex Pistols perfectly. "There was no time to find a location, set up the shoot, experiment with different lenses and lighting equipment – if I'd have played by the rule book I'd have missed the shot. It was simply chaos from beginning to end."

Having already visually documented the Pistols at The Marquee and on their infamous Thames boat trip to launch their God Save The Queen single – "it was actually pretty boring. The band were locked away downstairs for most of the time and it was a huge scramble to get off the boat and away from the police when we moored" – Dennis was further invited to join the band in Sweden. Turning up at Malcolm McLaren's office on Oxford Street, he asked when his services would be needed. On being handed his ticket and told the band had already left the day before, he boarded the Dover ferry in something of a hurry and with no clue as to where he was heading. On arriving in Sweden a chance meeting with a fan thankfully led him to the band's hotel. "I walked into the lobby and they were like, Hi Dennis, as if nothing had happened. That's how Malcolm McLaren and the Sex Pistols worked."

After declining the opportunity to fly with the band to the US – "a black guy in those redneck places, I would have got shot" – he was genuinely upset when the Pistols split on their return to England. But for John Lydon and Dennis Morris it was a friendship for life. After the pair holidayed in Jamaica with Richard Branson – "we were helping him sign reggae artists for Virgin" – Dennis went on to design the PiL logo for Lydon's next band, Public Image Limited and their Metal Box LP packaging. As art and A&R director at Island he signed Linton Kwesi Johnson and The Slits and has since chronicled everyone from Oasis and The Prodigy to dancehall gurus Capleton and Sizzla. He is also overseeing the reissue of his fantastic photo book, Destroy – an exhaustive visual account of the Sex Pistols in 1977 – to coincide with the Queen's Golden Jubilee.

"It's much easier to make money from the music industry now," he reflects. "But it seems we've gone full circle to a time pre-punk. We have boy bands singing stupid soppy love songs and dressing rooms full of hair stylists, make-up artists and image designers. We didn't have that in punk times. It didn't matter if someone had a spot or a crease in the wrong place. It was what we were saying that counted."

To order Dennis Morris's new book, a reissue of Destroy: Sex Pistols 1977 (Creation Books), available from 7 June 2002, go to: www.creationbooks.com

▶ PAUL & STEVE

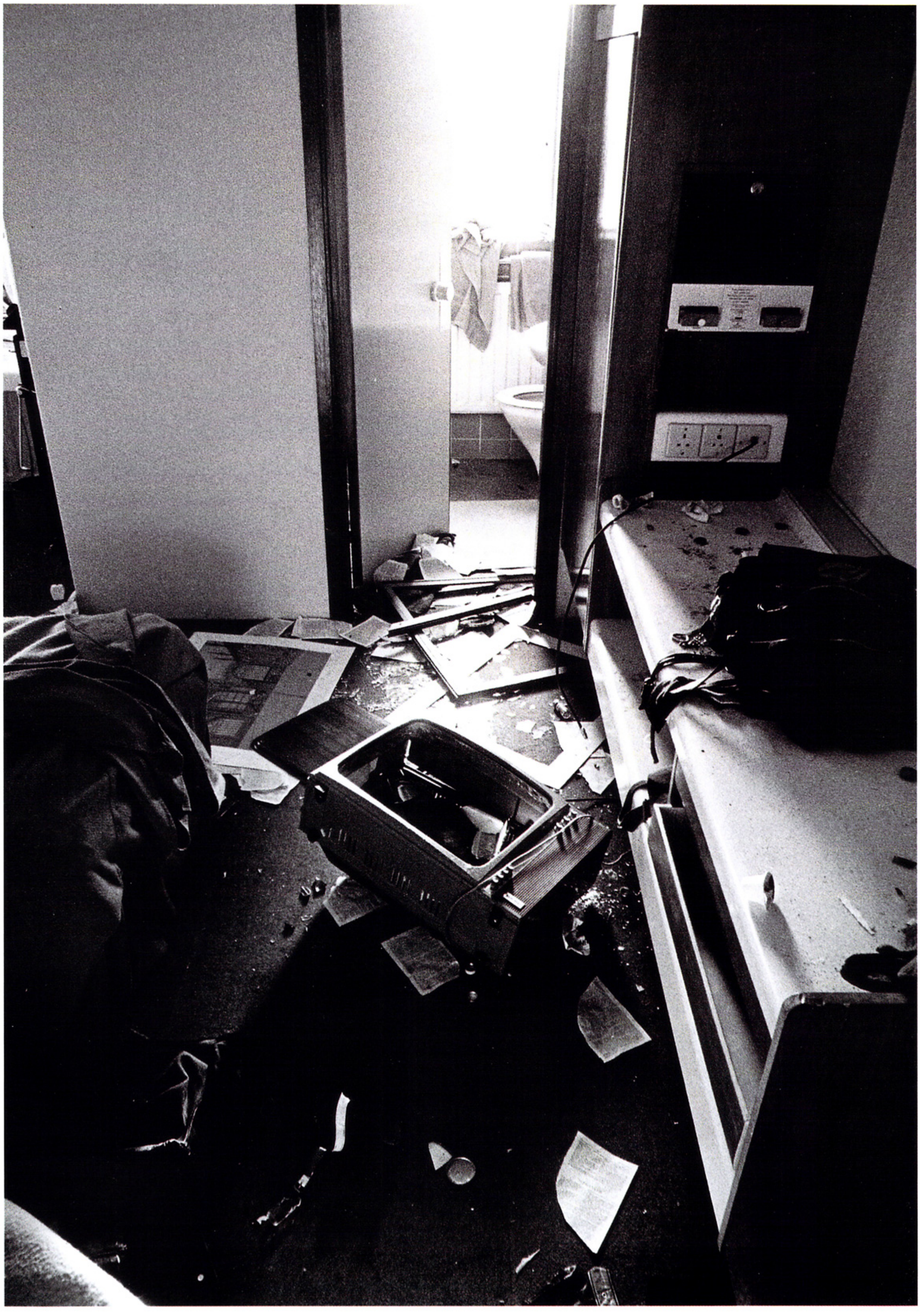
Halmstad, Sweden
15 July 1977

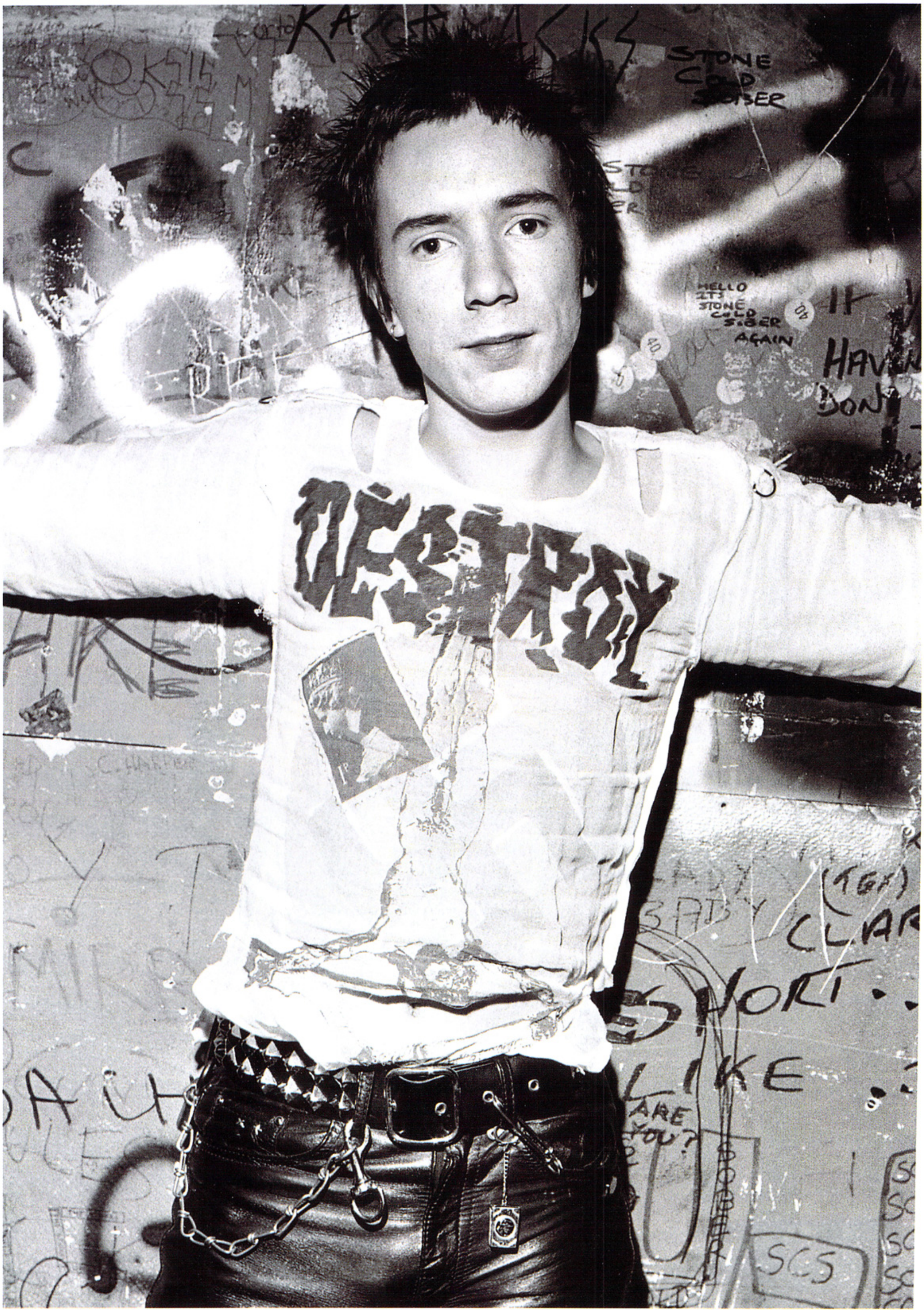
"Paul Cook hates this picture. It was taken on a rare day out on the Pistols' Swedish tour. The band rarely left their hotel rooms but here Paul and Steve Jones, who were very close, went on a stroll with Rodent, their roadie, who's just caught in shot. Steve, the eternal joker, bought the bananas from a local grocer and decided to fool about with them. The passers-by were disgusted but they had no idea who Paul and Steve were."

▶ HOTEL ROOM

Coventry
19 December 1977

"Sid was depressed. John had told him he wasn't allowed to see Nancy so he'd trashed his hotel room in retaliation. I took the photo in the morning just as the maid walked in and started screaming. Malcolm turned up, took the manager quietly to one side, said, 'How much? and paid. Once we were clear of the hotel he rang the police and the newspapers, as was Malcolm's way."




STONE
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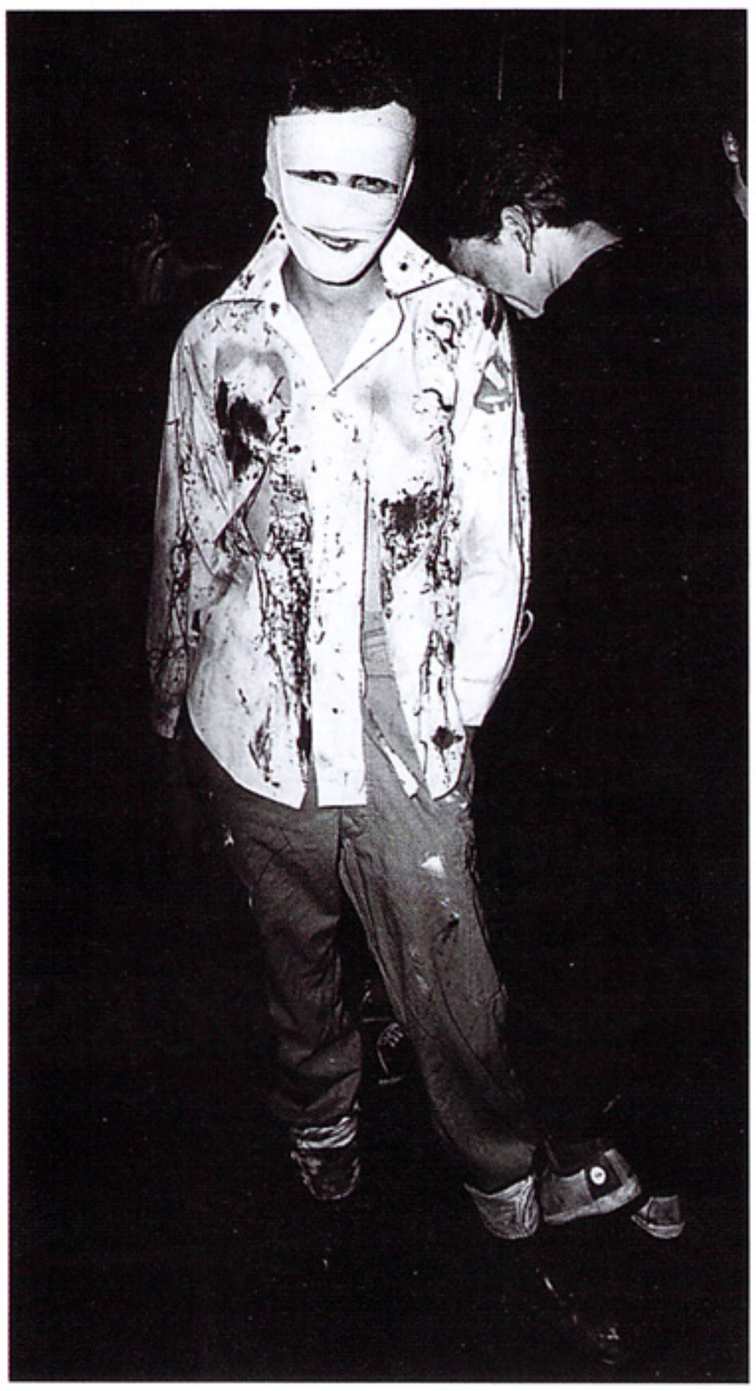

◀ JOHNNY ROTTEN

The Marquee, Wardour Street, London
12 February 1976

"This shot was taken backstage after playing the gig. The picture looks completely staged and styled but it wasn't. John just pulled the pose and I took the photograph. That's what the dressing room at The Marquee looked like back then – graffiti scrawled all over the walls. It really captures John. If you understood the band, which I did, you could get the maximum out of them."

◀ PUNK BOY

The Roxy, Neal Street, London
Date unknown

"This was taken at The Roxy, Don Letts was DJing and this kid, he must have only been about 18, walked in dressed as a casualty. He had bandages wrapped around his head and red paint splattered all over his shirt. It was really funny how you used to get normal-looking people come in carrying plastic bags. They'd head straight for the toilets and emerge half an hour later in their punk garb."

▼ SID & NANCY

Brunel University Students' Union, London
16 December 1977

"I took this backstage at the last gig the Pistols ever played in the UK. I think it shows how much Sid really loved Nancy. Before Sid was in the band, Nancy wanted nothing to do with him – basically because he didn't have any money. He was never into drugs until he met her but as they say, if you're with a junkie you become a junkie. They were unaware that I was snapping away as they were having a tiff."

NEVER MIND
THE BOLLOCKS
HERE'S THE
NEVER MIND
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HERE'S THE
GOD Save THE QUEEN
Sex Pistols

▶ SID VICIOUS

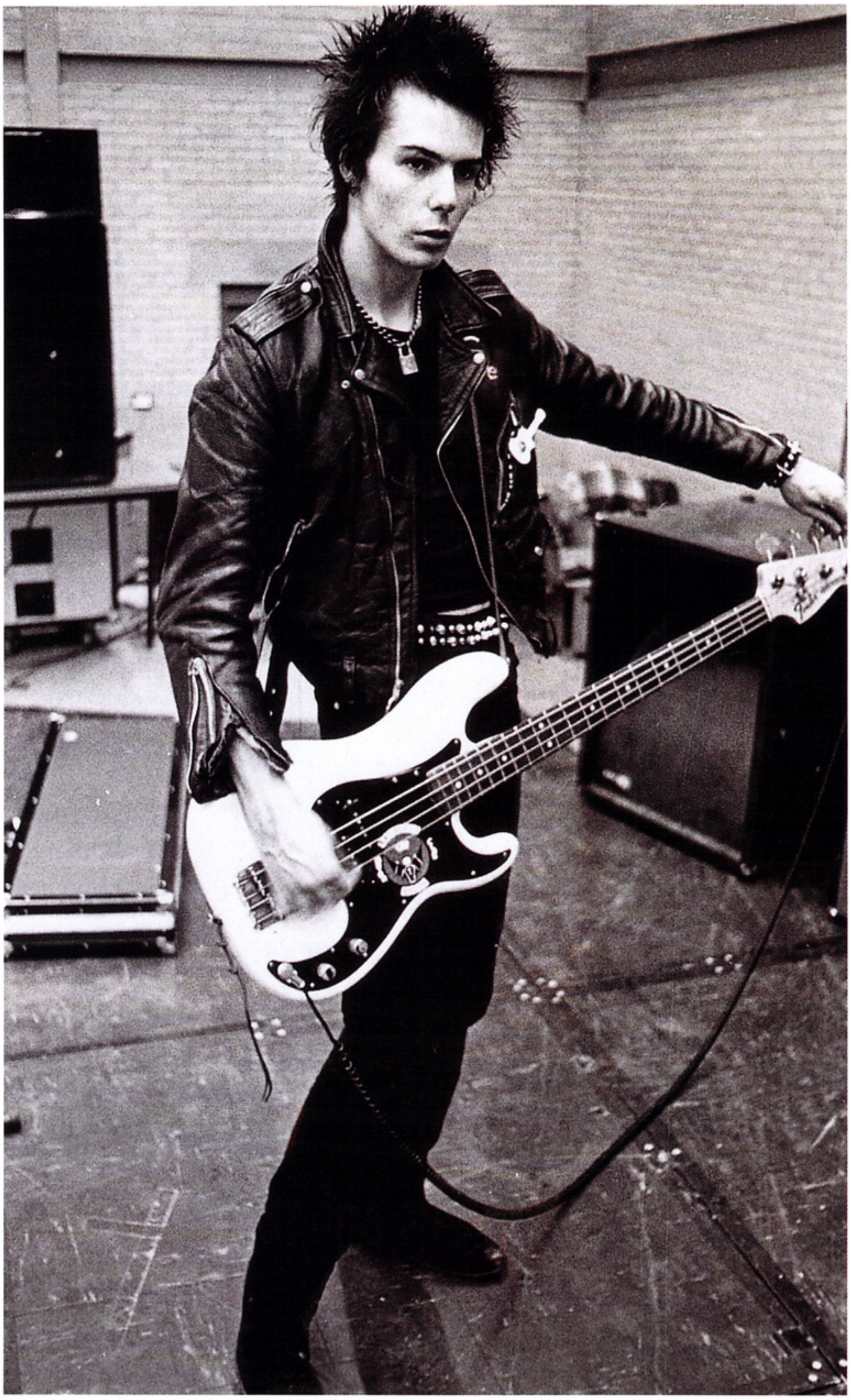
Brunel University Students' Union, London
16 December 1977

"Sid had such natural poise and style. Everyone was pleased when Sid joined the band. Glen was too good and they knew they could carry Sid musically. He could play but he wasn't a great player. Watching the Pistols perform you just didn't know where to look – you couldn't just focus on the centre because Paul was a fantastic drummer and Steve was a great guitarist, John was brilliant and then Sid was such a good showman too."

◀ KID IN SHOP

Virgin Records, Notting Hill Gate, London
28 October 1977

"This is what you call a third-eye shot – that is when taken out of context it will sum up the situation completely. Never Mind The Bollocks had just gone on sale and there was a mad rush of people. This kid had come along with his dad, was wearing his dad's crash helmet and gloves and holding one of the free posters the shop was giving away with the album. It was the juxtaposition of the cute, innocent kid with the reputation of the band and the word 'bollocks' blazoned everywhere behind him. Everyone bought the LP, not just punks."



"Looks didn't matter during the punk days. It was what we were saying that counted."

Class of '77

THE ADVERTS

They were the very epitome of punk rock – rough, ready and with loads of attitude. But then it all got a bit too rough for The Adverts. By Daphne Carr.

THE FILE

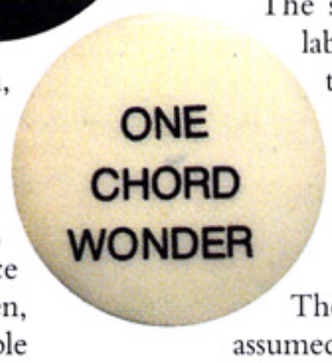
Personnel: TV Smith (vocals), Gaye Advert (bass), Howard Pickup (guitar), Laurie Driver (drums).
Hometown: Devon
Formed: 1976
The gameplan: For TV, to be the UK's punk-poet laureate. For Gaye, to be left alone.
First gig: 1976, The Roxy, London, opening for Generation X.
First record: One Chord Wonders, April 1977.
Biggest UK hit: Gary Gilmore's Eyes (Number 18), August 1977.

Future Advert, TV Smith rarely made classes at Devon's art college. Like many in 1975, practice and gigs meant more to him than school. At a show he met Gaye, a second-year student with the look and passion, but no training. Smith offered her bass lessons, and after being kicked out of his own band – Slaby Witness – for not wanting to cover Jimi Hendrix's Red House, he began writing songs with her.

They heard stories of the Pistols and decided London was the only place to be. Arriving in the summer of '76, Gaye worked at the Harrod's cheese counter and Smith did odd jobs while auditioning musicians who responded to their Melody Maker ad. Most guitarists shredded through Page-style solos, and the drummers were even worse. They decided on Howard Pickup and, says Smith, "out of desperation we took Laurie [Driver], though he didn't really fit in and took his first lesson on the drums a few hours before the audition."

The fledgling Adverts played The Roxy three weeks later, opening for Generation X. "Getting up onstage, the audience was curious – they just stood there with their eyes wide open, standing about 10 feet away. I'm sure we made a really terrible racket," recalls Smith.

Described as a shambles, their live set plummeted through troglodyte forms while Smith squirmed about and Gaye smouldered. The audience ate it up and The Damned's Brian James invited them on their upcoming tour and put them in contact with their label, Stiff. The resulting single, One Chord Wonders, became a self-deprecating anthem of anti-skill. Smith counted the American punks as lyrical idols, saying, "I liked The Beatles, but they said nothing to me. Iggy and The Ramones, they were talking about things in my life. My songs changed radically."



And so did their national profile: "After One Chord Wonders, people started to take us seriously as a band," says Smith. "We weren't just an art experiment. Then with Gary Gilmore's Eyes, in the summer of '77, we started playing all over England. The audience had changed even in six months – when we started at The Roxy it was half full, but suddenly it was packed and kids were going nuts, pogoing like traditional rock audiences and, unfortunately, spitting everywhere."

Gary Gilmore's Eyes became a Top 20 hit, a morbid tale of a man waking up with the transplanted oglers of a killer. The Adverts, with hits like Bored Teenagers, served up a unique brand of dark humour to The Clash's politico-ramble and the Sex Pistols' relentless nihilism. The single came out on Anchor Records, the label that they hoped would bring the band to American audiences and assure their success. But, as Smith recalls, "we got no support from them and when the parent company, ABC, heard our album, they wanted nothing to do with us."

Their album, Crossing The Red Sea With The Adverts, appeared in February 1978 and assumed legendary status. Still, their label and the music papers tiraded against their supposed amateurism. For Smith this only showed their ignorance. "They just didn't get it. And they still kept slagging off Gaye, who was actually no worse a bassist than Laurie was a drummer. The reason they did it was obvious – she was a woman."

And not just any woman – Gaye's Droog-eyed stare made the pages of Sounds regularly and she tempted thousands of teens watching Top Of The Pops to beg, borrow or steal some tough leather. She was the first punk pin-up. "People came out to see her but she didn't want to be a sex symbol. She didn't encourage it. Like almost everyone in the early scene, she concentrated on just being able to play her parts. She'd just chew gum and ignore everyone."

"People came to see Gaye but she didn't want to be a sex symbol. She'd just chew gum and ignore everyone." TV Smith

With criticism in hand, and RCA as a new label, they recorded Cast Of Thousands with Mike Oldfield's producer Tom Newman, a match so heinous they both laughed. Smith's musical ambitions forced the band beyond the three-chord monte, tempting critics again to attack. RCA did even less for The Adverts than previous labels, no copies of the album were in the shops and when Smith called them, "they didn't know who The Adverts were and had fired our A&R guy two weeks after he signed us."

Power struggles between Gaye and Laurie got vicious, and with Smith as Gaye's long-term boyfriend, the situation in the van became unbearable. Laurie got hepatitis on tour in Ireland in early 1979, and then Howard stopped coming to practise – a series of extras filed in and out, but for Smith it was over. "We couldn't stand the sight of each other. Also, we were losing popularity as punk crystallized into something we didn't believe in – aggressive, foul-mouthed yobs playing guitars at 100 miles-an-hour with nothing to say. It was diametrically opposed to what we were doing. It was that punk rock that destroyed us!"

PHOTOS: ALAIN DISTER/LFI

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

TV Smith
Smith still lives with Gaye in London. After The Adverts, he formed TV Smith's Explorers, The Cheap, and now simply goes by the name, TV Smith. He creates, records, releases and licenses everything on his own, as well as booking around 150 dates a year. "I've never been interviewed on television so people don't know how I've aged and don't recognise me as 'The Adverts guy', which is really good for me. At gigs people always come up and reminisce, but they don't see it as discontinued from what I do now."

Gaye Advert
Gaye (real surname, Atlas) dropped her leather coat and bass in the closet soon after The Adverts, never to be touched again. An animal rights activist, she works for the social services and sees the band as an illusion-breaking experience.

Howard Pickup
Boak, real name Howard Boak, died of a brain tumour a few years ago. Friends told Smith he'd beemn recording at home the whole time, just for himself.

Laurie Driver
The last Smith heard of Laurie Muscat he had moved to Iceland.

Glad to be Gaye: punk's first pin-up practises her smouldering look, London, 1978.

EYEWITNESS

4 October 1976
to 31 December 1976

Punk was gathering momentum, with its first records hitting the shops and touring bands spreading the word. And, in one notorious TV moment, Britain's moral guardians got wind of the threat to the nation's youth...

As the long hot summer shaded into autumn, The Bee Gee's, Abba and Fleetwood Mac dominated the charts on both sides of the Atlantic. Before the year ended, though, the doughty grans and grandads who had seen off the threat of Nazi domination would be gawping in complete bafflement at their children's children sporting Iron Crosses, swastikas and SS insignia, Johnny Rotten would be a household name, loved and hated in equal measure, and flares would, once again, become a word referring to incandescent distress rockets used to locate ships lost at sea.

4 October 1976

EMI's A&R team tries to have the Sex Pistols signed to the label.

Bob Mercer (MD, EMI): Basically, their message was, "The Pistols may be a piece of shit, musically, but it's what's happening in the streets. These are the forerunners of the punk movement. It's a feather in our cap to be able to sign them. Besides which, what do you know? You're over 30!" So I said, "Fine. Go ahead." And I gave them a limit on the deal, which was £40,000 for about two or three records in as many years, with options, which we would pay to record.

5 October 1976

Punk spreads to Scotland as The Rezillos make their live debut at Edinburgh College of Art.

8 October 1976

The Buzzcocks play St Boniface's

Daily Mirror
BRITAIN'S BIGGEST DAILY SALE
TV's Bill Grundy in rock outrage
?!★!
Judge in 'murder' pardon shocker
THE GROUP IN THE BIG TV RUMPUS
When the air turned blue..
THE FILTH AND THE FURY!
A POP group shocked millions of viewers last night with the filthiest language heard on British television.
Uproar as viewers jam phones
Shocker
WHO ARE THESE PUNKS?

Church Youth Club, Salford.

Howard Devoto (singer, Buzzcocks): We used the bass amp to stop John's drums drifting. And it just decimated Steve's valve amp.

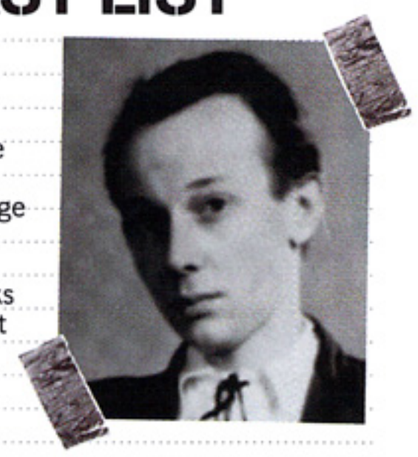
8 October 1976

The Sex Pistols sign a £40,000 two-year contract with EMI.

10 October 1976

The Sex Pistols are in Lansdowne Studios, London, recording a version of Anarchy In The UK with Dave Goodman.

THE CAST LIST



Howard Devoto
Devoto (right) co-founded the Buzzcocks with Pete Shelley in 1976. He also helped to arrange the Sex Pistols' first Manchester gig in 1976. The Buzzcocks recorded their debut vinyl outing, Spiral Scratch EP, shortly before Devoto departed to form seminal post-punk outfit Magazine. He and Pete Shelley recently reunited to record an album together called Buzzkunst.

Glen Matlock
Originally McLaren's Saturday boy at Sex, bassist Matlock joined the embryonic Pistols in 1976, but was replaced by Sid Vicious the following year and 'written out' of the story by McLaren, who claimed he "went on too long about Paul McCartney".

Dave Vanian
Vanian (below) was a former gravedigger and Dracula impersonator who was recruited into The Damned by Rat Scabies after displaying his vocal talents at a funeral. The Damned supported the Sex Pistols at the 100 Club in July 1976 and released their first single New Rose in October. Vanian is still touring with The Damned and his new band the Phantom Chords.

Wreckless Eric
Legendary boozer and pub rocker signed to Stiff, who released the minor punk classic Whole Wide World/ Semaphore Signals. Eric Goulden retired from the business in the early '80s, but later resurfaced in the Len Bright Combo with ex-Milkshakes members. He now lives in France and plays the odd gig.

PHOTOS: RAY STEVENSON

Johnny Rotten: a household name, loved and loathed in equal measure.

EYEWITNESS

11 October 1976

Lemonade factory quality control inspector Wreckless Eric drops off demo tapes at Stiff Records in London. In two days' time, they will secure him a recording deal.

Wreckless Eric: I'd read about Stiff, and they sounded pretty gullible. So I spent a weekend getting pissed and made this demo tape on the Monday morning... I put the tape in my pocket and went to Stiff. I thought they'd have a big office block but, when I got there, there was only this grotty little shop front.

14 October 1976

The Sex Pistols begin recording sessions with Mike Thorne.

Nick Mobbs (Head of A&R at EMI): When Mike's version had been recorded, we were all set to release that and we would have been very happy to do so. It was Malcolm who chickened out and said that he didn't think it was produced enough. He thought it was too raw. Suddenly, he seemed to be backtracking.

17 October 1976

The Sex Pistols are in Wessex Studio, London, recording another version of Anarchy In The UK with Pink Floyd/ Roxy Music producer Chris Thomas.

Chris Thomas: It took a very long day to get a backing track down, and it was probably edited. The problem was the interplay between the bass and drums. So we got a backing track down, then we did a lot of guitar overdubs. Steve already had a few ideas, and then we added a few more – there were a lot of guitar parts on Anarchy In The UK. About 16, I think.

18 October 1976

The Buzzcocks make their first recordings at Revolution Studios, Stockport.

Howard Devoto: We thought we sounded quite good, given how quickly we made it. We walked away with two quarter-inches [the initial master tape] and two cassettes. We hadn't got loads of cassette copies to send off to record labels. Pete Shelley's copy of the quarter-inch tape that he lent to somebody turned into the Time's Up bootleg.

21 October 1976

The Sex Pistols play at Queensway Hall, Dunstable, supported by The Jam.

Bruce Foxton (bassist, The Jam): We'd read all these things in the press about them not being able to play a note, that they were just a creation of Malcolm McLaren's and they didn't have any songs. Well, they did have some songs, and they were absolutely brilliant.

22 October 1976

The Damned release their debut single, New Rose.

Brian James (guitarist, The Damned): I wrote that in a quarter of an hour when I was living in Kilburn. The lyrics seemed to come out perfect with the riffs. The words have no particular relevance at all. It was a love song to do with something or other, but what it is I don't know.

Dave Vanian (singer, The Damned): It's always been lauded as the first punk single. At the time, it was a case of, "Let's do it." It was all done on the cheap – we didn't even pay for the tape.

23 October 1976

The Jam play an afternoon show in Soho Market, London.

John Ingham (reviewer, Sounds): Setting up on the pavement outside Soho Market about 12.30, they ripped it up for almost an hour. A small crowd developed, complete with beggar.

When The Clash play A Night Of Pure Energy at the ICA, London, supported by Subway Sect, Shane MacGowan, not yet a Pogue, bites the earlobe of Jane Crockford of The Mo-dettes.

28 October 1976

Eddie And The Hot Rods release a single, Teenage Depression.

10 November 1976

The Vibrators release their first single, Pogo Dancing, produced by Mickie Most, with noted guitarist Chris Spedding temporarily fronting the group.

Knox (singer, The Vibrators): Chris Spedding got Mickie Most interested and asked if we wanted to do a single with him, so we said, "Yes." But it was very difficult because he [Most] was a pop person and punk was very anti all that stuff... No other company was interested, so we thought we'd just do it. So we went in and did two singles, Pogo Dancing with Chris Spedding, and We Vibrate...

11 November 1976

A live recording of Anarchy In The UK is made by the Sex Pistols, to be broadcast the next day on the Nationwide TV show.

Glen Matlock (bassist, Sex Pistols): They used far too much dry ice, and we couldn't even see each other playing, so we didn't really know what was going on.

18 November 1976

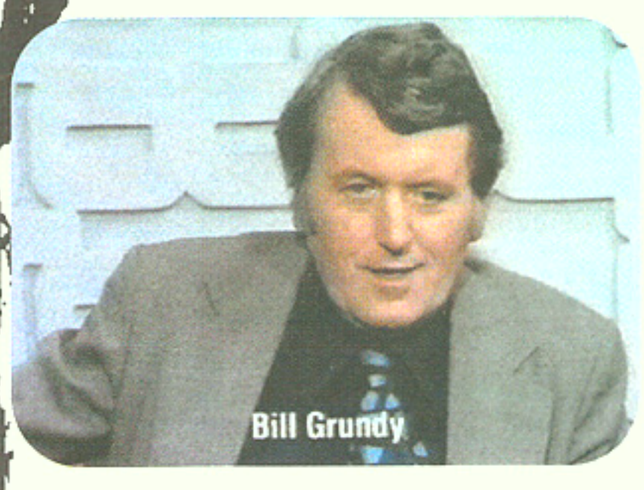
Richard Hell And The Voidoids make their debut at CBGB's in New York City.

The Derelicts play at The Nashville, London, supported by The Vibrators.

19 November 1976

The Sex Pistols release Anarchy In The UK. This evening, they play Hendon Polytechnic, where they perform No Future (later renamed God Save The Queen) for the first time.

Captain Sensible (bass, The Damned): We sat down to listen to it with bated breath. What are our rivals up to? They were rough and ready



"Bill Grundy was a fat, sexist beer monster who knew nothing about us. All he was interested in was the tits."

John Lydon

onstage all right, but no one knew what they'd sound like on record. When we heard it, we all pissed ourselves with laughter. It sounded like some redundant Bad Company out-take with, like, old man Steptoe singing over the top.

21 November 1976

The Stranglers play at The Nashville, London, supported by Chelsea. This is Chelsea's last gig with Billy Idol in the line-up.

22 November 1976

Eddie And The Hot Rods release their Teenage Depression LP.

28 November 1976

The Tom Robinson Band plays its first gig at The Hope & Anchor, Islington, London.

1 December 1976

In a TV interview with Bill Grundy, the Sex Pistols unleash several four-letter words.

Glen Matlock: Grundy was a big interviewer at the time, apparently he was the first person to interview The Beatles. He'd done Elizabeth Taylor too. We got the show because Queen pulled out at the last minute. He didn't really want to interview us, and he took it out on us, going, "Say something outrageous."

John Lydon: Grundy was a fat, sexist beer monster who knew nothing about us and shouldn't have been interviewing us in the first place. All we did was point that out. All he was interested in was the tits.

Mark Rye (label manager, EMI): We were watching it on TV at the office and we all thought it was hilarious. The more outrageous it got, the more I was thinking, "Brilliant! This'll sell loads of records."

Captain Sensible: After the show, Malcolm McLaren really tore into them. He was convinced they'd blown it. He was appalled. "You fuckin' idiots, you've ruined everything. We're finished." He was apparently in tears. He thought it was all over. The vibe was bad for the rest of the day.

Paul Cook (drummer, Sex Pistols): Our lives changed totally after that show. We suddenly became public enemy number one, couldn't walk down the street without some arsehole having a go.

Leslie Hill (MD, EMI): I had some personal reservations but I felt here we were again with something big. It was like another Beatles – 50,000 singles sold in just a few weeks – and we'd been talking for years about finding a new Beatles. It wasn't just the Sex Pistols that were the problem. It was the damage I knew would be done to us in the industry at large because, if we let them go, people on the outside would see us again as a fuddy-duddy record company.

Johnny Thunders' Heartbreakers plus Nancy Spungen, arrive at Heathrow Airport, London, with one-way tickets and no work permits, to join the Sex Pistols, The Clash and The Damned on the Anarchy Tour.

Chrissie Hynde (singer, The Pretenders): The New York people came and brought their heroin, end of story. They also brought Nancy Spungen, who turned Sid into a sex slave.

John Lydon: The major mistake was when I introduced Nancy Spungen to Sid Vicious. I thought he'd laugh her off as a complete joke. That backfired in the most horrible, horrible way. "Look, Sid, this is the latest joke that's arrived in town." "Oh, she's great. Everybody hates her." She was a very negative person. Such spite.

2 December 1976

The Sex Pistols make the front pages of the tabloid press following the Bill Grundy episode.

Elvis Costello: I had to go to work the next day and sit with everybody... there was all these middle-aged guys reading the newspaper, the steam coming out of their ears. It was really funny.

Leslie Hill: Malcolm came up to the office... He claimed that the band had been goaded and I was inclined to accept that, but my direct boss, Len Wood, who had run EMI Records at the time of The Beatles, was horrified by the use of the word "fuck". I told McLaren that although I didn't like it personally, that's not what I'm paid for, and that I would try to help him – if he could keep the group in line.

3 December 1976

Norwich University, the first date on the Sex Pistols/The Clash/ The Damned/The Heartbreakers Anarchy tour, is cancelled, so the bands drive straight to the Crest Hotel, Derby.

Joe Strummer: All that business on the Pistols tour. I hated it. I HATED it! It was the Pistols' time. We were in the background. The first few nights were terrible. We were just locked up in a hotel room with the Pistols, doing nothing.

TIME CAPSULE

As the nation thrilled to the exploits of The Sweeney, the phrases 'junk food' and 'photo opportunity' entered the vocabulary. Also...

4 October
British Rail introduces the HS-125, the fastest diesel rail service with a speed of up to 125mph.

26 October
The Queen opens the National Theatre.

2 November
Jimmy Carter is elected US President.

27 November
The four-millionth Mini is made.

1 December
Jury trial for minor offences is abolished.

It is reported that The Stranglers have signed a recording contract with United Artists Records.

4 December 1976

Anarchy In The UK is reviewed by NME. EMI record packers go on strike, refusing to package the Anarchy single.

Cliff White (reviewer, NME): Johnny Rotten sings flat, the song is laughably naïve, and the overall feeling is of a third-rate Who imitation.

Paul Cook: It was withdrawn by EMI straight away, so it was all over in five minutes. It entered the charts at about 38, then went out.

Bob Mercer (director of marketing, EMI): The pressure was all coming from EMI's corporate side. The last thing we needed in December was a dispute at the factory, because that's when the Christmas singles are being pressed and album sales are at their highest.

6 December 1976

The Anarchy Tour finally starts, at Leeds Polytechnic.

EYEWITNESS

"Did you spill my pint?!" Joe Strummer (left) and Steve Jones take a rest from being hounded around the country on the Anarchy Tour.

"Loonies were going around the hall asking people if they were punks. If they said yes they would punk them!"

Dave Goodman, Pistols roadie.

Glen Matlock: Outside of London we didn't have much of a fan base. This was the tour that was going to carry the punk thing out of London. In Leeds, most of the kids came out of prurient interest, generated mostly by the Grundy thing.

7 December 1976

Anarchy Tour gig at Village Bowl, Bournemouth is cancelled.

Leee Black Childers (manager, The Heartbreakers): We'd be met at town borders by the mayor and the entire constabulary. In freezing cold winter blizzard weather, they would not even let us go to our hotel, much less let us play our show.

8 December 1976

XTC play at The Affair, Swindon.

9 December 1976

The Anarchy Tour plays at the Electric Circus, Manchester.

Dave Goodman (sound engineer/roadie, Sex Pistols): Some loonies were going around the hall asking people whether or not they were punks. If the answer was yes, they would go and punch them!

Frank Brunger (label manager, EMI): It was easily the most terrifying concert I've ever been to. The glasses and bottles soon started flying.

Tony Wilson (Factory Records owner/TV presenter): After the show I set off to find them. I found out they were staying at the Rosa Hotel in Didsbury, but when I got to within 50 yards of the place, there was a ring of police cars with their lights flashing, circling the place. The Pistols were being hounded around the country.

10 December 1976

Generation X, a new band formed by Billy Idol, plays its first gig, at the Central College of Art, London.

The Stranglers' gig at The Nashville, London, is recorded for a live LP, planned as their debut.

11 December 1976

Anarchy Tour gig at the Stadium, Liverpool, is cancelled.

John Lydon: Not doing any gigs turned us internally against each other. We got frustrated and began looking at each other suspiciously. We were bored and at each other's backs.

13 December 1976
Anarchy Tour gig at Colston Hall, Bristol, is cancelled.

14 December 1976
A preview night for the soon-to-open Roxy Club, Covent Garden, London, features Siouxsie And The Banshees and Generation X.

Anarchy Tour gig at the Top Rank, Cardiff is cancelled, and replaced by Castle Cinema, Caerphilly.

Glen Matlock: Of all places, there was already some kind of punk scene in place in Wales. A kid called Steve Harrington, who later became Steve Strange, turned up at Caerphilly to see us, and he was wearing all the gear from Boy [punk clothes shop in London], which I would never have predicted. We were inside in the warm but there was all these religious nuts outside in the snow, with a loud hailer, shouting things like, "You will still be redeemed, if you come out now." There was a Labour and a Tory MP having a fight about us as well.

15-18 December 1976
Four consecutive Anarchy Tour gigs are cancelled.

19 December 1976
The Anarchy Tour makes a return visit to the Electric Circus, Manchester, replacing a cancelled gig at the Civic Hall, Guildford.

Dave Goodman: The Electric was an old boarded-up cinema, in the middle of this area where they'd torn the houses down all around it. We were stuck in there, and there was a local football derby on that day, Manchester City versus Manchester United. We started to hear these chants coming in from outside of, "Kill the punks! Kill the punks!" Some punk kids had arrived early and these football thugs were after them. There were police on horses and everything. So we had to let the punk kids into the cinema, but that meant some of the thugs forced their way in as well. I remember Johnny Thunders and the guys from The Heartbreakers standing on the stairs punching these guys back.

21 December 1976
The Anarchy Tour plays at Woods Centre, Plymouth.

22 December 1976
The Anarchy Tour plays at Woods Centre, Plymouth, again, because the 400 Ballroom, Torquay, has been cancelled.

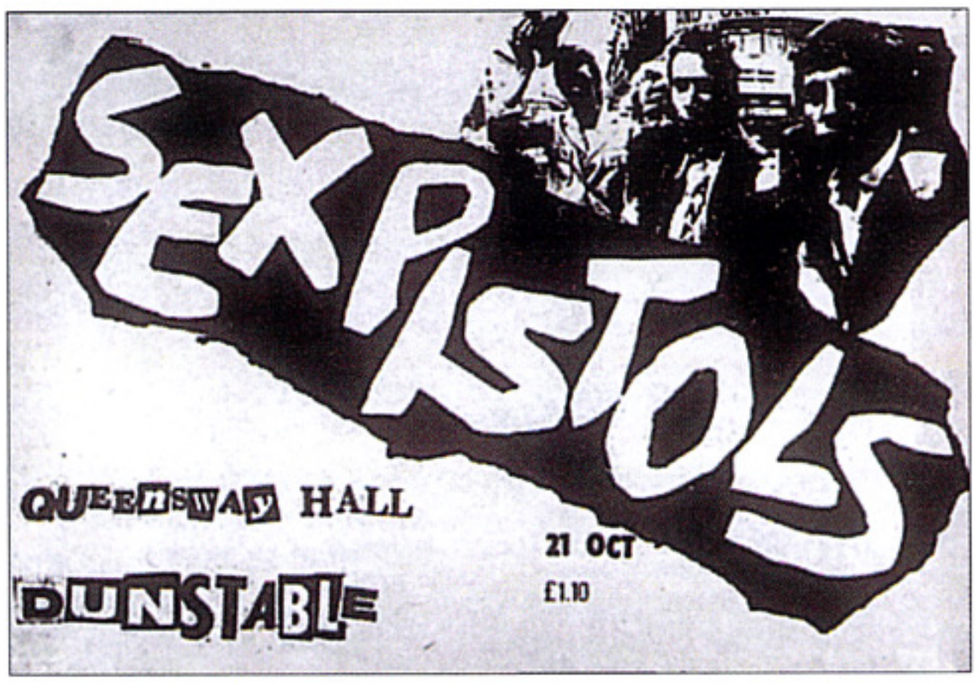
Glen Matlock: This was probably the best gig of the whole tour, probably because we were all so happy that it was finally over. We didn't even bother to change into our stage clothes, just played for each other. Each band got up and played and then, as they came off the stage, handed their instruments on to the next band.

24 December 1976
With the Anarchy Tour over, the Sex Pistols, The Clash and The Heartbreakers return to London.

Joe Strummer: When I got back to London, I felt awful. I was really destroyed because, after a few days, you get used to eating. We were eating Holiday Inn rubbish but it was two meals a day. When I got off the coach we had no money. I felt twice as hungry as before. I had nowhere to live and I remember walking away from the coach deliberately not putting on my woolly jumper. I walked all the way up Tottenham Court Road and it was really cold but I wanted to get as cold and miserable as I could. I just felt like it was the worst thing in the world that the tour had ended.

25 December 1976
Journalist Caroline Coon makes Christmas dinner for the Sex Pistols, The Clash and The Damned.

Caroline Coon: John Ingham and I did turkey and all the trimmings, Christmas pudding with flaming brandy, and it was wonderful. We got out the mince pies and the Stilton, and then The Heartbreakers turned up and the mood changed horribly. They were so rude and nasty. They were showing the English kids how to shoot up heroin.



Jerry Nolan (drummer, Heartbreakers): We hung out a lot with the Sex Pistols. I was the first guy to turn Sid Vicious on to heroin.

26 December 1976
The Sex Pistols begin a recording session with producer Chris Thomas at Wessex Studios.

Chris Thomas: We went in to do the next batch of stuff which was God Save The Queen, Pretty Vacant, EMI, and I think the B-side of God Save The Queen. It was recorded on Boxing Day of 1976 if I remember rightly. This was when Glen had been kicked out – but he was then invited to come down and play bass on the record! He didn't turn up, or he turned up late. Now I may be wrong, I believe that was the Boxing Day sessions – but maybe we went in later and did it. But I remember we did those four in one afternoon.

28 December 1976
The Buzzcocks begin recording at Indigo Sound Studio, Manchester, with producer Martin Hannett. The result will be their debut EP, Spiral Scratch.

30 December 1976
A thousand regular patrons of Friar's Club, Aylesbury, present a petition to the owners asking them never to allow bands like the Sex Pistols to play in the venue.

31 December 1976
Anarchy In The UK by the Sex Pistols makes it into the NME's Singles Of The Year.

Billy Idol, fronting Generation X, who debuted at the Central College of Art on 10 December.

PHOTOS: JOHN INGHAM, RAY STEVENSON

RAMONES

To the uninitiated they were a bunch of scruffy hoodlums, to those who gave them a chance, however, they were the undisputed kings of punk pop. By Joe Cushley.

THE FILE

Personnel: Joey Ramone (vocals), Johnny Ramone (guitar), Dee Dee Ramone (bass), Tommy Ramone (drums).
Hometown: Forest Hills, New York, USA
Formed: 1974
The gameplan: To strip away the musical excesses and pretensions which came to taint late '60s and early '70s rock, and restate the governing principles of red-blooded rock'n'roll.
First gig: 30 March 1974, The Performance Studio, New York.
First record: Ramones, July 1976.
Biggest UK hit: Baby, I Love You (Number 8), January 1980.

Andy Warhol and avant-garde films were strong influences on them, and they boasted a *drummer* who talks about the band's "intellectual underpinnings". That would be the Ramones then. Wha?! But, the Ramones were cartoon characters in leather jackets who yelled "1-2-3-4" and played two-minute-long songs at silly velocities!

Well, although there was a bit of that going on, the band themselves felt greater kinship with art-rockers such as Talking Heads – with whom they often played – than some of their more Neanderthal contemporaries stalking the early New York punk scene. Tommy Ramone (born Tommy Erdelyi), the thinking-person's hide-basher mentioned above, explains:

"The fights in the band just stemmed from nervous energy." Tommy Ramone

"The folks from Talking Heads were at one of our first shows. They were like us in that they were into ideas not virtuosity. The people who prejudged us as hoodlums hadn't given us a total listen. I think people had to see us three or four times before they could get a total reaction, and see the wit and intelligence behind it all. Actually, different people could relate to us on different levels. Some liked the raucous nature of the music, some liked the pop tunes and sensibility, and others were more interested in the intellectual underpinnings…"

The Ramones – Dee Dee (Douglas Colvin), Joey (Jeffrey Hyman) and Johnny (John Cummings), along with Tommy – had all attended Forest Hills High School in New York, graduating between 1967 and 1969. And they had all played in bands before things began to coalesce in early 1974.

"The glam and glitter thing was starting to die out in New York. Joey and I had been in bands on that scene that were falling apart, and we talked about putting a band together that would rehearse at the studio I co-owned," explains Tommy. "Over a period of a few months this really unique stuff just fell together. It was not a conscious thing, but it evolved very quickly. It was a Best Of… what we'd grown up with – Little Richard, Dion & The Belmonts, surf music, alongside The Stooges and MC5. We wanted to get back to the spirit and essence of rock'n'roll. We wanted to filter out the garbage that bands like Kansas and fifth-generation rehashes of the Stones were putting out. And I suppose the artier stuff; the films, Andy Warhol, minimalism, it all contributed to the sound. And we just wore what we'd worn in high school."

This alchemical mix, taken with their unparalleled seek-and-destroy live appearances, combined to make the Ramones the standard-bearers of the 1970s punk revolution.

After an early gig with Joey on drums, the band secured a regular gig in late summer 1974 at New York's legendary CBGB's, with Tommy now ensconced behind the kit. A series of chaotic live cameos led to a cult following. Their 20-minute sets rarely passed without some internecine violence.

"I think the fights in the band just stemmed from nervous energy," chortles Tommy, drily. "Again, it wasn't a conscious thing that we were doing, but after the bickering and fights we'd go back on and play twice as good as before. Let's put it this way – we never actively discouraged it!"

During 1975 they hawked their demo tape around, eventually being signed by Seymour Stein to Sire Records. The deal meant that the Ramones became only the second act from the punk scene (Patti Smith being the first) signed to an established record label.

Their eponymous debut album, released in May 1976, was an artistic triumph, but made little chart impact. On their first tour of the United Kingdom in July that year, however, the hoo-hah was hagiographical. They were just the catalyst that the nascent British punk movement needed. Bands like The Clash, Sex Pistols and Buzzcocks all worshipped at their altar. And Anglophiles Tommy and Joey were especially pleased with their reception.

"Everywhere we went people were going, Wow!, and then going off and forming their own bands," smiles Tommy.

And, to this day, they still are. It's hard to see the likes of Green Day, Offspring and even Nirvana existing without the fast four freaks from Forest Hills.

"We knew we were good and we knew we were doing something different," remembers Tommy. "It was great to be part of the whole punk thing. Bands like Blondie and Talking Heads were like cousins to us. Punk was like family."

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Joey
The lanky one (second left) 'left the building' on 15 April 2001, defeated by cancer. The obituaries were uniformly warm. He left behind a splendid posthumous album, Don't Worry About Me, which he'd begun recording as soon as the band finally split in August 1996; and spent the rest of his final years hanging out as a genial, grand old man of punk.

Tommy
Tommy (left) forsook his playing duties with the band after Rocket To Russia but took the producer's chair on the final album from their '76 to '78 heyday, Road To Ruin, and on Too Tough To Die – a 1985 return to some sort of form. Since then he's worked mainly on the recording side (he produced The Replacements' masterpiece, Tim), and is now concentrating on his own Uncle Monk project.

Dee Dee
Quite the renaissance man, Dee Dee (far right). Though he left the Ramones in 1989 to become rapper Dee Dee King, he still contributed to the band's output during the '90s. He releases solo albums regularly, paints, produces a fanzine called Takin' Dope, and has even penned a novel, Chelsea Horror Hotel.

Johnny
Johnny (second right) now lives in LA amidst his baseball and Elvis memorabilia collections. After the Ramones' final album, he said: "My goal's always been to do nothing. I'll be so busy doing nothing, I won't have time for any thing else." However, he's currently working on a Ramones tribute album.

PHOTOS: RETNA/BOB GRUEN (STAR FILE)

The Blitzkrieg boppers miss their bus, New York, 1975.

One... Two... Three.... Four!

Punk was short, sharp and to the point – perfect for singles, then. Paul Du Noyer picks 20 of the best.

1. SEX PISTOLS

God Save The Queen
May 1977

The Sex Pistols' second single is heavy with dread and menacing as a nightmare. It burst upon the world with the intention of stirring up a storm and, in this, succeeded so well that it practically destroyed its creators. God Save The Queen is simultaneously the sound of punk rock's greatest triumph and the beginning of its own destruction.

Specifically written for the Queen's Jubilee, the single had a tortuous history. By the time of the final recording, its melodic architect, Glen Matlock, had been replaced by the iconic but inept Sid Vicious while Steve Jones stood in on bass. The group had been sacked by EMI and signed to A&M in a ceremony outside Buckingham Palace, but were dropped again before the record's release. It finally appeared on Virgin, by the grace of grinning hip capitalist Richard Branson.

Despite impressive sales, the single mysteriously failed to reach Number 1. There were even rumours of a BPI fix when the Jubilee week's chart put Rod Stewart on top. Thus the music industry's long march to political respectability continued; but punk and the Sex Pistols were trapped in a cul-de-sac. As the song said, "No future": the group were vilified, banned and physically attacked.

And now another Jubilee is due. Like the House of Windsor, the Pistols faced 25 years of mixed fortunes, marked by premature death and the faint aroma of underachievement, but also pockets of lingering affection in the British psyche. It was a classic confrontation of guttersnipe and toff, yet neither side won. For the grinning hip capitalist, however, establishment status beckoned.

2. THE DAMNED
New Rose
October 1976

It's striking to note that Britain's first punk record was simply a teenage love song. In the innocence of its early months, no one knew that punk rock was meant to be "about" anything. The Damned had no McLaren-esque agenda and none of The Clash's ideological top-dressing. They revelled, instead, in the sheer pleasure of noise and the classically retro values of teenage pop. So much for Year Zero iconoclasm: singer Dave Vanian's mumbled introduction, "Is she really going out with him?" was a cute quotation from The Shangri-La's' Leader Of The Pack, while the B-side was a cover of The Beatles' Help!.

Released just a couple of weeks before Anarchy In The UK, New Rose was an almighty, invigorating racket. Stiff Records' producer Nick Lowe deployed The Damned as willing young cannon fodder in his fight against elaborate stadium stodge. With every knob at 11, the band thrashed valiantly over the heroic clatter of Rat Scabies's drumming. And don't overlook the gem-like vignette of urban romance in Brian James's lyric. The breathless rush of a new affair was a wonderfully apt overture for punk rock itself.

3. SEX PISTOLS
Anarchy In The UK
November 1976

For a record that changed the course of musical history, Anarchy In The UK only reached a modest Number 38 in the charts – thanks to a panicked EMI who pulled the record and binned the band. Musically, this single remains a landmark and the first in the Sex Pistols' immortal quartet of 45s, followed by God Save The Queen, Pretty Vacant and Holidays In The Sun.

The bubbling stew of provocative ideas in the song was supplied by Malcolm McLaren, Vivienne Westwood and graphic artist Jamie Reid, brilliantly distilled by Rotten and soundtracked with violent panache by the band and producer Chris Thomas. And yet, if there is a craving for mayhem at the core of Anarchy..., nobody involved in the project foresaw the scale of pandemonium it unleashed.

As the debut release by British punk's unquestioned figureheads, Anarchy In The UK opened deep divisions in the land. What's surprising in retrospect is how traditional its rock'n'roll values were: the Pistols were Mott The Hoople with a haircut. The true revolution here was one of attitude. The day this record came out, you were either with the Resistance or the collaborators.

4. THE CLASH
White Riot
March 1977

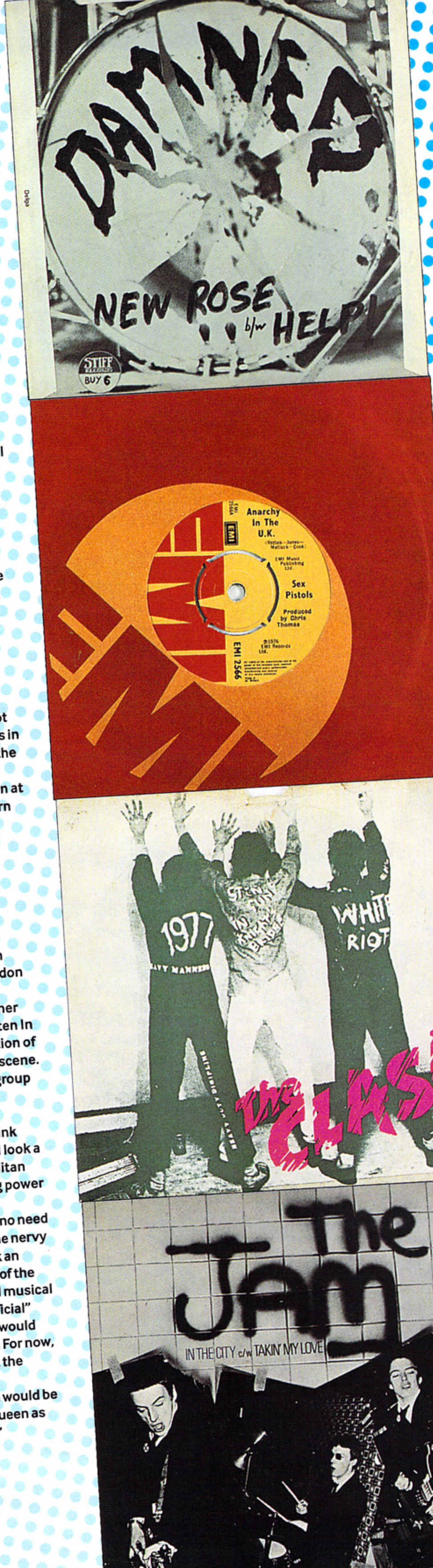
The Notting Hill Carnival of 1976 witnessed a spectacular eruption of civic tensions, as the police fought running battles with black youths. The anti-rozzer factions found a couple of pale-faced recruits in Strummer, J, and Simonon, P, who hurled bricks with vim and tried – unsuccessfully – to set fire to a car. At one point in the proceedings, however, our spiky-topped insurrectionaries found themselves the target of black hostility: the incident persuaded them they were still outsiders in someone else's fight.

The Clash's incendiary first single was therefore a call to arms, urging white youths to display the same defiance as their black counterparts. White Riot was an eye-catching title, but in the fraught racial climate of the day it was open to misinterpretation; the imploring yelps of Strummer's vocal were all but unintelligible over the slash-and-burn soundtrack. However, with the music press on hand to explain The Clash's every utterance, the band's radical manifesto was quickly beyond doubt and dissected by urban commandos in sixth-form common rooms across the land. Meanwhile, a dramatic photograph of a police charge, taken at the same carnival, would soon adorn The Clash's legendary first album.

5. THE JAM
In The City
April 1977

For all their sharp suits and shiny shoes, there was a whiff of the combine harvester about The Jam – or so it seemed to the inner London clique who ruled punk rock in the beginning. A teenage out-of-towner from Surrey, Paul Weller had written In The City as a passionate declaration of his love for London and its punk scene. Within a year, though, when his group released the song as their debut single, Weller was already disillusioned by the hipsters. Punk insiders deemed The Jam's mod look a little too hicksville for metropolitan tastes, and doubted the staying power of Weller's '60s revivalism.

As it turned out, The Jam had no need of in-crowd endorsement, for the nervy rush of Weller's anthems struck an instant chord in the desolation of the provinces. For sheer attack and musical verve, The Jam rivalled any "official" punk act, while Weller's career would prove the sturdiest of them all. For now, though, stung by his rejection, the singer took refuge in patriotic perversity: he told the NME he would be voting Tory, and praised the Queen as "the best diplomat we've got."



Three Chord Wonders: (from top) Boomtown Rats, Eddie And The Hot Rods, Wreckless Eric and Slaughter & The Dogs.

6. THE CLASH
Complete Control
September 1977

The title made mocking reference to a remark made by their manager Bernie Rhodes, but the real bone of Complete Control's contention was The Clash's tortured relationship with CBS. That British punk's most avowedly left-wing act should sign to American mega-capitalists was a source of mirth to cynics and a cause of soul-searching anguish among the group's supporters. The lyric begins with a moan about CBS's release of an LP track, Remote Control, as an unauthorised single. But it's the added boom of reggae producer Lee Perry that lends an even more epic texture to the ranting.

7. BUZZCOCKS
Spiral Scratch EP
January 1977

When punk rock reached the North of England it began to take on unpredictable new forms. Manchester was the first provincial city to develop a thriving punk scene of its own, largely inspired by a Sex Pistols visit that Buzzcocks Pete Shelley and Howard Devoto helped organise. The key track of this EP, released on their own label, was the slyly sardonic Boredom, laced with a humorous detachment and stiffened with the pop vitality that Shelley would become proficient in.

God Save The Queen is both the sound of punk rock's greatest triumph and the beginning of its own destruction.

8. PENETRATION
Don't Dictate
November 1977

In the North-east the punk movement found its keenest converts in Penetration, fronted by Pauline Murray. The group were musically adept: in the Stalinist style of the period, some of the longer-haired band members were accused of harbouring prog-rock sympathies. But they were also tuneful and, in Murray, they had a thoughtful writer and vivacious singer whose style contrasted well with punk's more lumpen tendencies. As one of the few female writers around, Murray looked to Patti Smith for inspiration as much as the more conventional role models.

9. THE DAMNED
Neat Neat Neat
February 1977

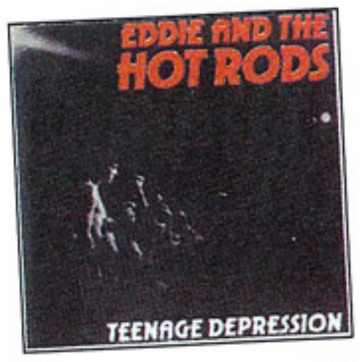
Though its lyric comes within inches of being disjointed gibberish, the very meaninglessness of Neat Neat Neat supports the claim that The Damned were a truer punk group than either the Sex Pistols or The Clash. Their entire first album, from which the track is taken, was recorded by Nick Lowe in less than a day. Released as the follow-up to New Rose, Neat Neat Neat was even more stripped-down than its predecessor. As Captain Sensible's comic inclinations got stronger The Damned became commanders of punk's pantomime wing, but tracks like this were a testimony to the tightly-drilled band of belligerent little bastards they remained at heart.

10. X-RAY SPEX
Oh Bondage! Up Yours!
October 1977

The London punk movement was a small army of reinvented personalities, but few were as vivid as the former Marion Elliot, who emerged from a King's Road market stall as Poly Styrene. She and X-Ray Spex specialised in pop art critiques of consumer culture and its dehumanising effects (a theme perfected on the trance-like Germ Free Adolescent). Oh Bondage! Up Yours!, of course, had a feminist resonance that played well in those formative years of anti-sexist awareness. But its primary target was the conformity that was already overtaking punk itself. Ms Styrene, for her part, would take her search in a spiritual direction down the Hare Krishna route.

11. THE STRANGLERS
Something Better Change
July 1977

There were two kinds of punk band: the sort that was inspired into existence by seeing the Sex Pistols, and the sort that made a shrewd sideways move when it saw how the wind was changing direction. Clearly men of the latter category, the elderly Stranglers overcame their lack of authenticity by out-yobbing every young band in town: Peaches and (Get A) Grip (On Yourself) were lumbering and nasty, while No More Heroes and Something Better Change were rich in rhetorical anger. If The Stranglers really were old hippies, they were born at Altamont not Woodstock.



12. EDDIE AND THE HOT RODS
Teenage Depression
October 1976

Despite their youth and musical ferocity, Eddie And The Hot Rods appeared on the scene just a bit too early to be considered punk. And by the time it arrived they showed no inclination to take part. They were really a bluesy rock'n'roll band from the same Canvey Island stable as their elder mentors Dr Feelgood, and fashioned a classic in Do Anything You Wanna Do. But Teenage Depression is their punkiest moment, in the same goosed-up Eddie Cochran spirit that galvanised the Pistols.

13. THE VIBRATORS
We Vibrate
November 1976

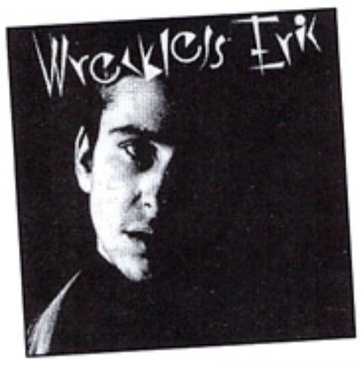
Their rather larky name betrayed The Vibrators' pre-punk mentality: they were from the pop conveyor belt of Mickie Most's Rak label and gave the impression of old lags who could play this stuff standing on their heads. Having made the necessary trips to the barber's and the alteration tailors, they emerged with breezy knockabout numbers such as this one, a rather knowing pastiche of early-1960s dance craze numbers like Do The Locomotion. Bubblegum punk, in other words, by men who could barely pretend to take the whole thing seriously.

14. GENERATION X
Your Generation
September 1977

Tony James had been among the pool of players who gave rise to The Clash and The Damned, while Idol was an ace face in the 'Bromley contingent' of early Pistols fans. By the time they formed Generation X, however, the pair's more commercial yearnings were turning blatant, and they were the first punk band to look purpose-built for Top Of The Pops. Ultimately, Idol's rock god posing would launch him into super-stardom, while James's fondness for pop would end up in Sigue Sigue Sputnik. Your Generation, meanwhile, is punk rebellion in a shrink-wrapped package.

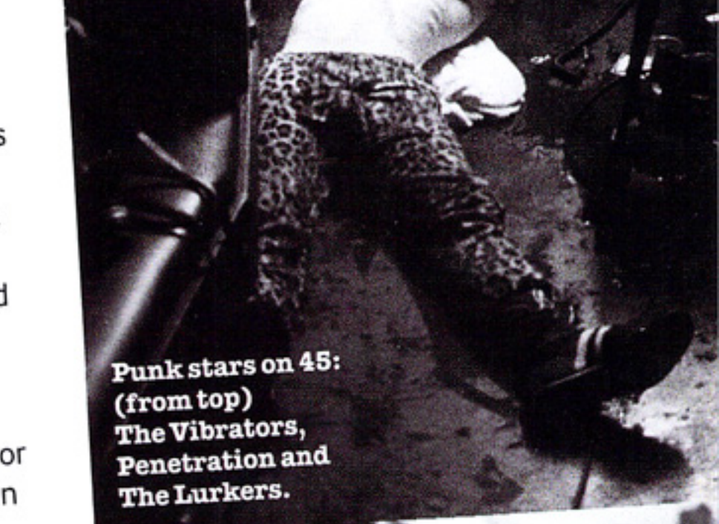
15. THE ADVERTS
One Chord Wonders
April 1977

Much to the band's own discomfort, the intelligence of TV Smith's songwriting was eclipsed by the iconic allure of bassist Gaye Advert, British punk's only significant female pin-up. Smith composed One Chord Wonders in just 20 minutes, giving it a stomping neo-glam appeal that's difficult to resist, while its cheerful assault on muso values makes for the perfect punk statement: a celebration of the talent amnesty that allowed some gifted primitives the chance to entertain us despite their lack of craftsmanship.

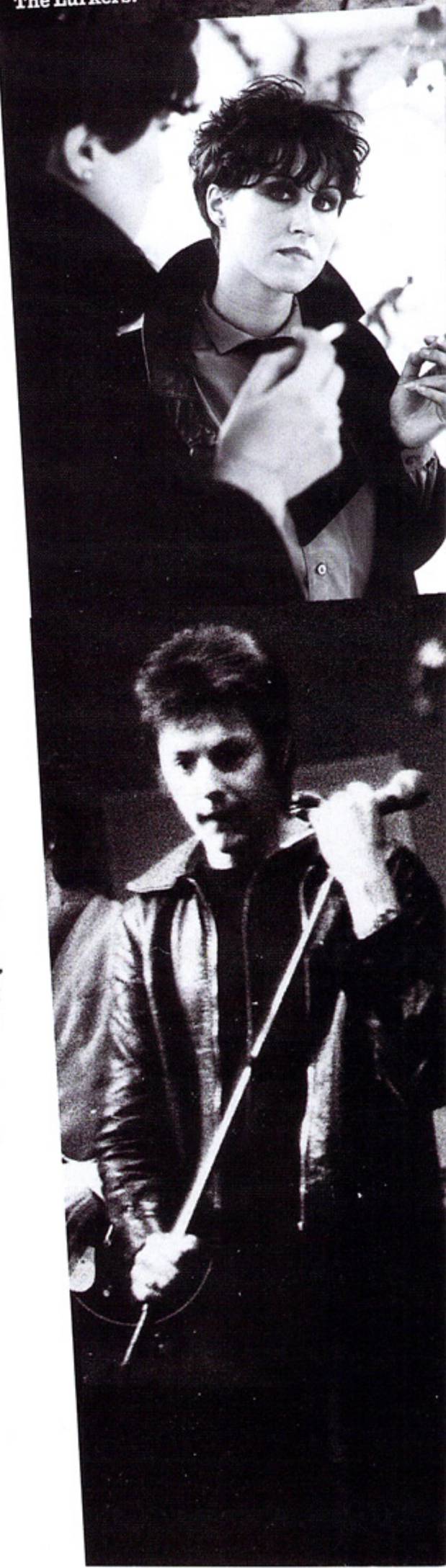


16. WRECKLESS ERIC
Whole Wide World
August 1977

Stiff Records came to specialise in acquiring those waifs and strays, such as Ian Dury and Elvis Costello, whose careers were made possible by punk without being quite punks themselves. Wreckless Eric was another, and a beneficiary of the aesthetic amnesty which, for a time, released musicians from the obligation to look either good or cool. Written on a park bench in Hull, Whole Wide World is the poignant howl of a lonely romantic, dreaming of love with 'totty' on sun-kissed beaches. One could admire his poetic desperation without necessarily fancying his chances.

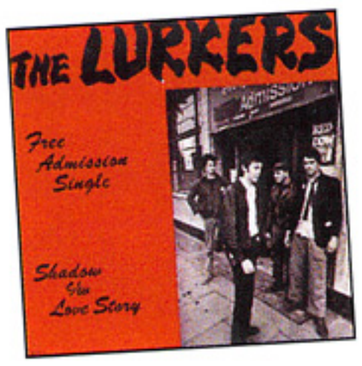


Punk stars on 45: (from top) The Vibrators, Penetration and The Lurkers.



17. CHELSEA
Right To Work
June 1977

Life took on a sombre hue for Gene October when his bandmates Tony James and Billy Idol suddenly left to form Generation X. In the best traditions of showbusiness, however, he picked himself up and penned this defiant tirade. Many listeners mistook it for a righteous attack on capitalism, but October's wrath was actually directed at trade union "closed shop" policies. In his deserted state he identified with workers who were denied their livelihoods by others. Significantly, Chelsea's sponsor was the indie Step Forward label owned by the not-at-all socialist Miles Copeland.



18. THE LURKERS
Shadow
July 1977

As Strauss was to the waltz, so The Lurkers were to the pogo. The nearest they came to a timeless melody – and it's not very near at all – Shadow is a Ramones-style bash, constructed around a riff of limited ambition. But the sheer absence of cunning in this track's conception made it a favourite for the perpendicular dance style evolved by punks to accommodate their rhythmic shortcomings and confined floor-space. It's often the simplest life-forms which are hardest to eradicate, and The Lurkers are known to be gigging still.

19. SLAUGHTER & THE DOGS
Where Have All The Boot Boys Gone?
September 1977

Whereas the punk mainstream would soon put on primary colours and become 'new wave', the purist fringes kept the faith. Some became anarcho-vegetarians like Crass, but others took the proletarian brutalist path pioneered by Manchester's Slaughter & The Dogs. It's not a pretty thing, this garbled lament for skinhead glory, but you'd trust it to charge across no-man's land in a hail of bullets. Curiously, the band were at one time admired by a sensitive young local named Morrissey.

20. BOOMTOWN RATS
Lookin' After No. 1
August 1977

Their isolation from the London scene enabled Dublin's Boomtown Rats to undergo an opportunist punk make-over in relative privacy. Like Paul Weller, the singer Bob Geldof was an object of some suspicion among the taste-makers, but Top Of The Pops allowed the Rats to leapfrog critical esteem and reach the public directly. For many young fans in TV land, Lookin' After No. 1 was the first punk music they encountered and it defined the chart-punk style: catchy, fast and brattish. (And wearing a skinny tie, obviously.) The producer Mutt Lange, however, was merely warming up for Def Leppard and Shania Twain.

PHOTOS: IAN DICKSON@LATE20THCENTURYBOY.COM, ROBERT ELLIS, GEOFF SHIELDS

SHAM 69

Jimmy Pursey and co's rousing anthems may have caught on with the punk masses but an unwanted skinhead following soon finished them. By Andy Cowan.

THE FILE

Personnel: Jimmy Pursey (vocals), Dave Parsons (guitar), David Treganna (bass), Mark Cain (drums).
Hometown: Hersham, Surrey.
Formed: 1975
The gameplan: Pursey: "I just wanted to be in a band that made fast and furious music and would become notorious."
First gig: As Sham 69 Mk 2, 1976, The Roxy, London.
First record: I Don't Wanna, October 1977.
Biggest UK hit: Hersham Boys (Number 6), August 1979.

"If you think about it, punk was really a 500-yard square radius of Oxford Street," says a remarkably chipper Jimmy Pursey in his infamously unrefined estuary tones. "Outside of that, it was Manchester and a few other cities but, really, you had to come to that hub, to that core, to have any real knowledge of what was going on in those early days."

Pursey, now 46, but in age-defying nick, is holding forth about Hersham Herberts Sham 69, the rambunctious vagabonds he assembled to gatecrash the punk party from outside the city limits. Formerly a regular at the notorious Walton Hop (long before the dark shadow of Jonathan King would sully its reputation), when Pursey formed Sham in 1975 he'd already rifled through the pop cultural drawer looking for a sound of his own. Punk was his epiphany.

"I knew people would respond to this dustbin-type raw jumble sale music – it was hard-hitting." Jimmy Pursey

"I was always in different tribes before, but finding punk rock was the first thing I could actually say, This is really me. I remember playing Guildford University. People were still listening to things like Ten Years After. We were playing songs like Borstal Breakout and What Have We Got and they were sitting on the floor going, Oh my God, what's this? It immediately came across to me that no matter what this dustbin-type raw jumble sale music was, it was hard-hitting. You knew people would respond to it."

What Pursey didn't have, at the time, was the band to realise his singular vision. So after a year plugging away at the margins he unceremoniously sacked the lot.

"They wanted to be in a band, but I wanted to be in a notorious band," he says forcefully. "They didn't have the same ideology as me. I knew the music was more forceful and popular just by having verse and chorus, not by worrying how loud the hi-hats were or having a middle-eight here or an edit there. I just wanted a fast and furious music."

So out went guitarist Johnny Goodfornothing and drummer Billy Bostik, and in came co-writer Dave Parsons (guitar), bassist Albie Slider (soon to be replaced by David 'Kermit' Treganna) and drummer Mark Cain, and a whole new set of rousing, terrace anthems for the disaffected. The progress of Sham 69 Mk 2 was rapid. The band played their first London show at The Roxy, supporting Generation X, with the press straight on their tail.

"Tony Parsons saw us and there was a write-up in next week's NME. There was a picture of me looking gangly, shirt off, bent over in an odd-angled way but it was a great photograph, great piece and it did the job of promoting Sham as a very energetic band with an attitude."

Loads more gigs at The Roxy followed – "We always thought it was the headquarters of punk. The Roxy was the stamping of approval that you were a punk band" – and the band soon cut their vinyl teeth with the manic I Don't Wanna on Miles Copeland's Step Forward label (with Mark Perry, editor of fanzine Sniffin' Glue, credited with providing beers). By now Pursey had really found his muse, and was penning brash sing-along working-class anthems at a prodigious rate.

"The lyrics came naturally to me because they were things that I was surrounded with every day in the street – sitting around bus stops, going to clubs. The whole thing of punk wasn't that original. It was just a token form of rock'n'roll with a piece of attitude behind it, but the people involved were all so colourful – I don't think you'll ever find that again."

The un-style-conscious Sham had since signed to Polydor and started on a successful chart raid – five Top 30 hits between 1978 and '80 – but Jimmy Pursey's natural ebullience and confrontational style saw him overly burdened with the 'spokesman for an angry generation' tag.

"I wasn't setting myself out to be the new messiah or a prophet of doom or as, Hey, Jimmy's gonna be the next politician. I wanted to be a Citizen Smith, a joke as well. If I did anything radical it was to turn around and say, I am Jimmy. There's nothing else to this. This is why punk is so much ME."

But Sham's problems didn't end there. Their live shows had always attracted a yobbish element, but were increasingly marred by right-wing ruckus merchants bent on destruction.

"It was the most disturbing thing ever – like being in a trench in the First World War, then having to live with it for years and years afterwards. It was a battle I could only win by carrying on. Sometimes I didn't want to, but thank God I did. It's important for me to get across that this band was never selling skinhead and never ever said anything else other than, We hate Nazis."

While Sham 69 would return anew seven years later, in 1980 the effect was palpable. And when their lacklustre fourth album, The Game, trickled out to mass indifference, the writing was already on the wall.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Jimmy Pursey
After he split from Sham 69 in 1980, mouthpiece Pursey (pictured second from right) pursued an ill-starred solo career in between scraping a renaissance existence as, variably, a dancer, producer, painter, scriptwriter and actor. He reformed Sham in 1987 with old songwriting partner Dave Parsons, joined by the new rhythm section of Matt Sergeant and Ian Whitewood.

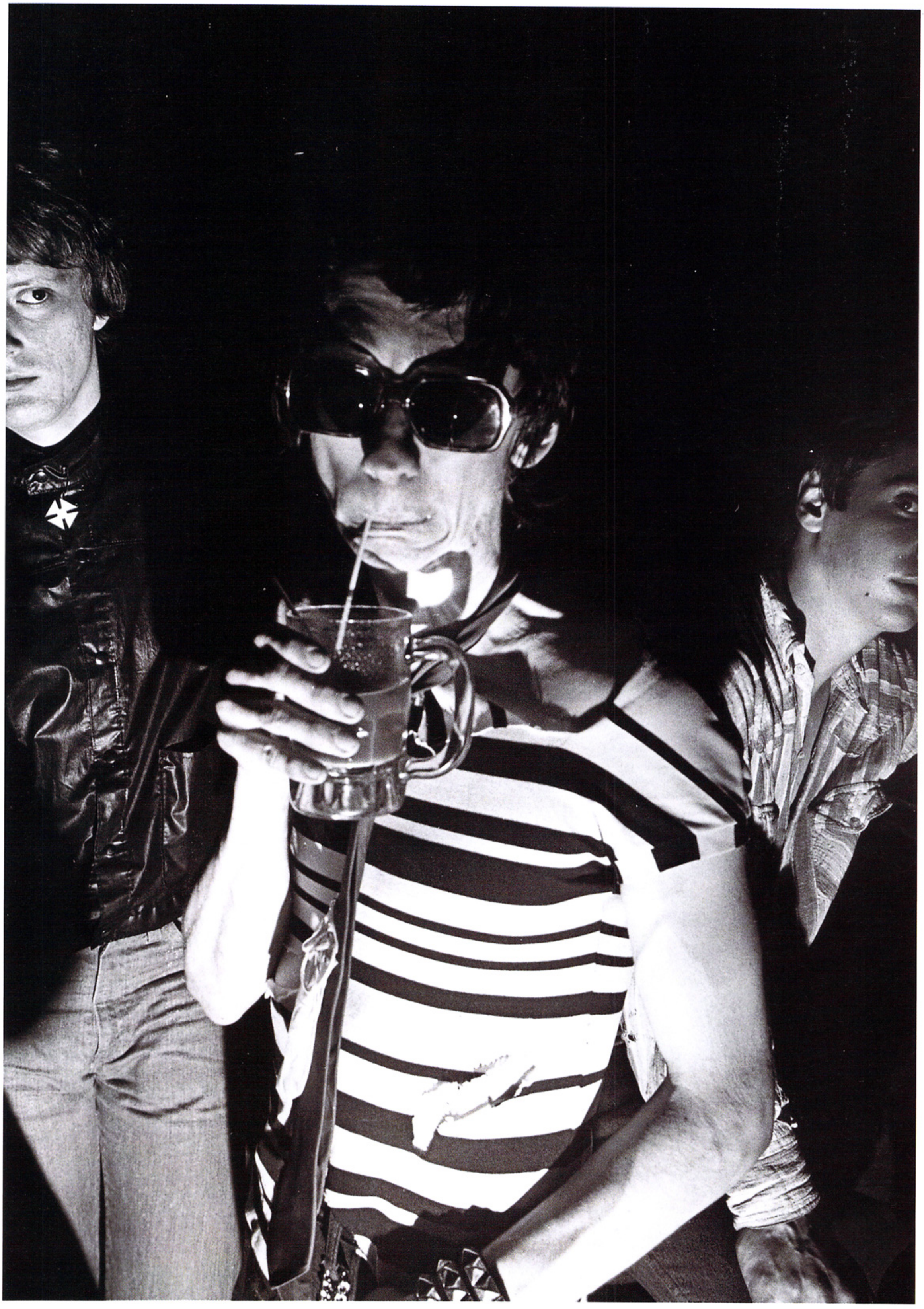
Dave Parsons
Parsons (second from right) and Pursey have produced several studio LPs – most notably 1995's concept set Soapy Water And Mr Marmalade and the punkified return to form of The A Files (1999) – amid a seemingly endless slew of tawdry compilations and bootlegs. A live DVD of their recent concert at Brighton's Concorde II is out soon, and Sham 2002 are still as maniacally energised as stalwart punk geezers in their 40s can be.

David Treganna
After Sham first split, David 'Kermit' Treganna (far right) continued with The Wanderers (initially with Parsons), eventually mutating into punk supergroup Lords Of The New Church alongside Brian James (ex-Damned), Stiv Bators (ex-Dead Boys) and Nicky Turner (ex-Barracudas). They split in '88 after three under-achieving LPs for IRS, the diminutive Treganna joining metal combo the Cherry Bombs. He's now back in a reformed Lords, and recently turned up on Never Mind The Buzzcocks.

Mark Cain
Cain (far left) is, according to Pursey, "a painter and decorator, happily married with four kids".

PHOTOS: RAY STEVENSON/HARRY GOODWIN

Victory Vs:
Jimmy Pursey
rips it up in 1977.



TAKING MANHATTAN

New York snapper Godlis made his name shooting the fledgling punk scene at the legendary CBGB's club. Here, he tells Paul Stokes how it all happened.

From 1975, the cauldron from which British punk took its routes was the New York club CBGB's. The venue played host to the original punk scene, featuring the likes of the Ramones, New York Dolls and Blondie, among others. However, unlike its London counterparts, CBGB's was not a focal point for a city-wide scene, the club was the scene – plus, according to photographer (David) Godlis, who made it his nocturnal home, it was just a great place to hang out.

"I trained as a photographer in Boston and then headed to New York to look for work in 1975," explains Godlis, who shared a passion for classical music with his parents (classical musicians themselves). "I was always drawn to music, so I wanted to go and listen to music, there wasn't really many clubs and I didn't really know what was going on in New York." Situated on the Bowery just off First Avenue, CBGB's became a magnet for those looking for something different. "The first time I wandered in I saw Television playing and then I just never stopped going," he explains. "The people were friendly and the drinks were cheap. It probably took me about 24 hours to *get* what Television were doing, but after that the jukebox began to sound good. Then, after a few days, I thought, I should be taking pictures here."

With a job assisting a commercial photographer during the day, Godlis was not dependent on magazine commissions for his livelihood and so dedicated himself to capturing the club, the punters and the bands in a style informed by his training and not the fashions of the day.

"I'd been looking at this book by Brassai, pictures of '30s Paris taken at night, and it started seeping into me that I could take pictures like that here," he explains. "The few photographers who were already coming in the club were using flash, taking a punk kind of picture. I just thought I can photograph this thing without flash and make it look like it really looked. I wanted to photograph people while they were talking and acting naturally, not as if they were being photographed professionally. So I began shooting people in the street and hanging out in the club while I was there getting a couple drinks. People tell me that my pictures remind them exactly how they remember it being."

What they remember, though, is different from what many latecomers, searching for a false credibility, have since ascribed to CBGB's. For a start, there weren't that many people there.

"You were never validated by anybody outside the club," Godlis reveals. "There was probably only enough people to fill a subway car there so once you got out into the real world of New York you weren't going to see anybody who looked like people did in the clubs. Punk wasn't publicised that much here in America, we used to have to read about in the NME."

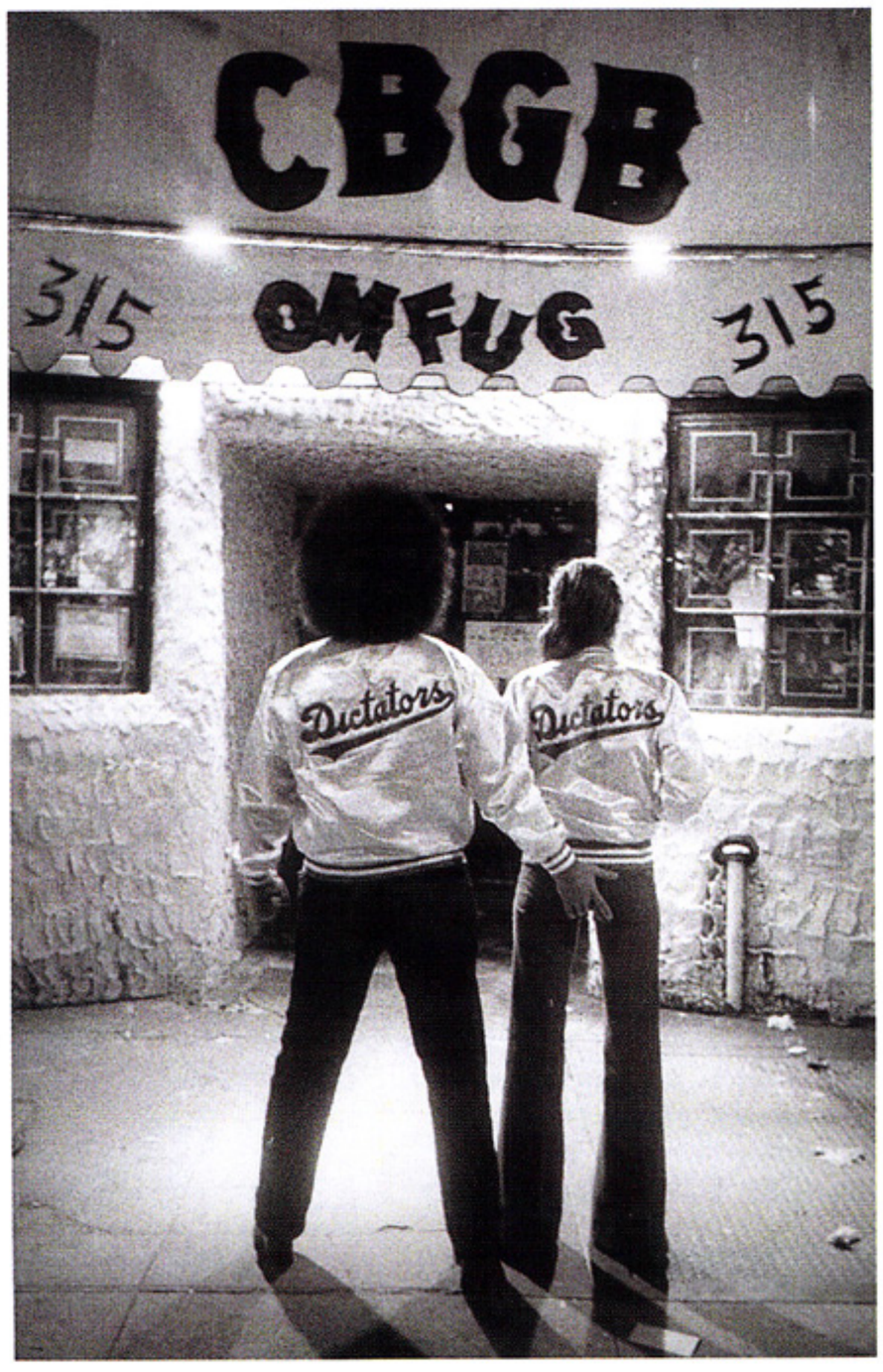
Gradually Goldis's candid CBGB's photos were shown in the NME and smaller publications like Punk and Creem, but the American mainstream press wasn't interested until British punk conquered the US originators, and even then they got it wrong.

"People over here were always interested in what was going on in England," recalls Godlis. "It was a bit overwhelming how much attention the English punk bands got. The New York punk scene had very little exposure until the Sex Pistols came along. It was weird, people started to think CBGB's had evolved from the English punk thing."

When the CBGB's bands began touring to capitalise on their new-found fame, particularly in Europe, the club lost its tight-knit feel and it struggled to recreate its peak. And though the venue continues to prosper today, Godlis believes that for a brief period back in the mid to late '70s, CBGB's created a unique scene that would have a profound impact on American popular culture.

"People back then were sick of inventing scenes, they'd lived through Elvis and they knew they couldn't top that so they said, How about we invent nothing?" he explains. "That's what the people who went to CBGB's were struck by, that apathy in the mainstream against any form of change. Richard Hell's song Blank Generation put it best. That, I think, was genius."

For more information go to: www.godlis.com



▶ DICK MANITOBA

Outside CBGB's, 1976

"I took this shot after my first night at CBGB's. I'd lost my wallet in the club and I got a phone call the next morning from Handsome Dick Manitoba, of The Dictators, saying he'd found it. He gave it back to me and everything was still in it, even the money, so I said I would take a picture of him and his girlfriend in return. That kind of thing made me realise how great people were down there."

◀ STIV BATORS

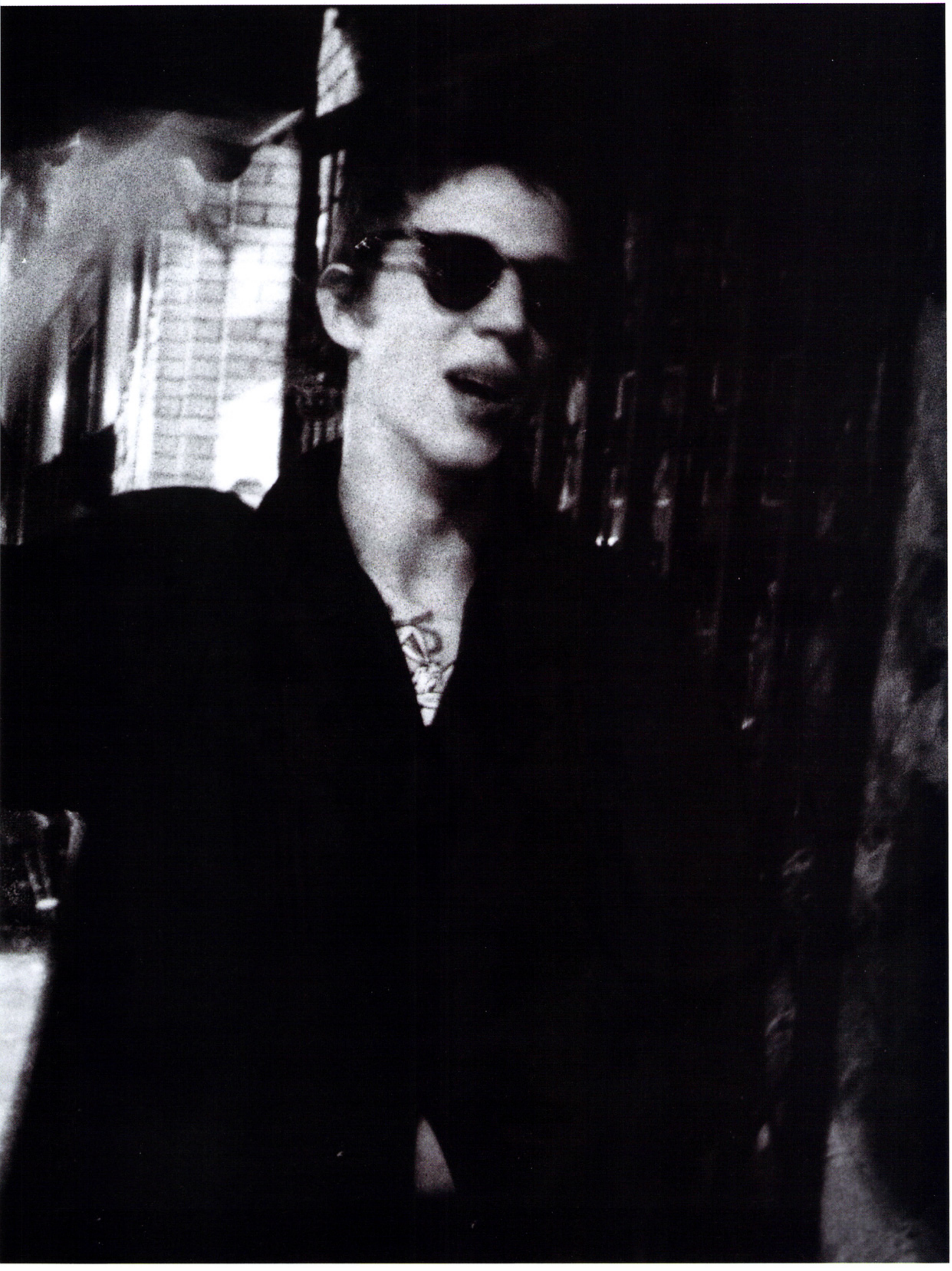
CBGB's, 1977

"This is a picture of Stiv Bators from The Dead Boys. I was having an ugly contest, I wanted to see who I could make the most ugly and this won. I also did one of Lenny Kaye – which was runner-up – and he later used it on a single cover. This was shot with a flash which I wouldn't normally use. I was sick of everyone saying to me, Your flash didn't go off. So that night I decided to catch everyone off guard and use it!"

▶ RICHARD HELL

Bowery, New York, 1977

"This was taken at four in the morning after one of Hell's sets at the club. It was pouring with rain, but I was determined to photograph him that night as the Bowery looked like a film noir set. He thought I was nuts. I think the roll ends with him getting in a cab and getting out of there."



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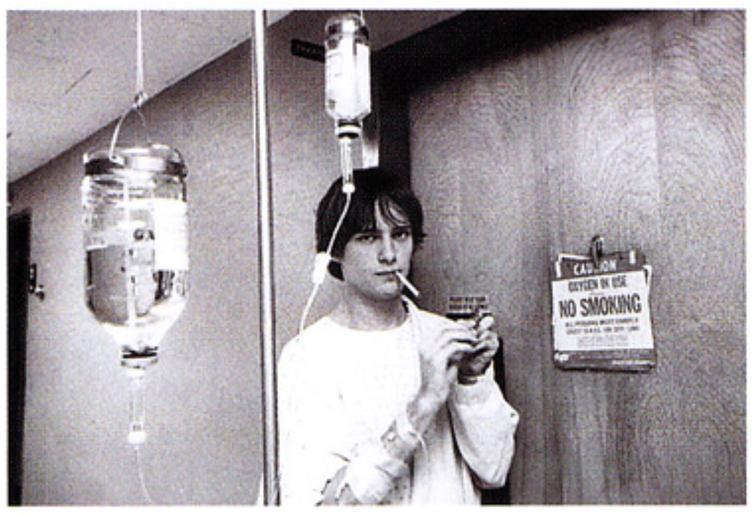


◀ RICHARD LLOYD

Beth Israel Hospital, New York, 1977

"This is Television's guitarist Richard Lloyd enjoying a cigarette in hospital. The band's second album was going to be delayed so the band asked me to take some press pictures to explain why it would be late. He was an in-patient as he had some sort of blood related disease. We photographed Richard everywhere, he was always in such great spirits. The drip you see isn't a prop, he was actually hooked up to it."

▼ TELEVISION

St Mark's Place, New York, 1977

"This was a session for Television's second record, though it wasn't used in the end. I got a call from this girl, Deerfrance, who sort of knew everyone, and she told me I had to ring a certain number at a certain time but couldn't tell me any more. I called and got Fred [Smith] from Television and he set up the session. The band weren't very talkative that day, so I just kept quiet, walked backwards and kept shooting."

◀ JOEY RAMONE

CBGB's, 1977

"I photographed The Ramones a lot because they were one of my favourites. This shot was taken at the very end of their set, it's the last note just feeding back and the microphone stand was off balance and just swinging back and forth. Your ears are completely blown out at this point but you've had a great time."

▶ PATTI SMITH

Outside CBGB's, 1976

"Patti was hanging out on the streets between sets and I couldn't stop myself from butting in on her conversation because she was in the perfect spot for the shot. I knew the lightening out there instinctively, it's almost as if those street lamps were my studio lights. It was a quarter of a second exposure and I remember when I pushed the button thinking this is *the* Patti picture if I can just hold still. Actually, she called me up a couple of years ago and said, Sorry I never thanked you for that picture."

"I'd been looking at these photos of '30s Paris taken at night, and I thought I could take pictures like that here."

Class of '77

BLONDIE

Blondie had a long way to travel from New York's downtown dives to chart-topping world stardom. David Sheppard takes a look at how they got there.

THE FILE

Personnel: Debbie Harry (vocals), Chris Stein (guitar), Jimmy Destri (keyboards), Clem Burke (drums), Gary Valentine (bass).
Hometown: New York City
Formed: 1974
The gameplan: To recast classic '60s pop as a wittily hip art/trash phenomenon. To make the kind of records "we grew up listening to, when you couldn't find a bad record on AM radio" according to Gary Valentine.
First gig: August 1974, CBGB's, New York City.
First record: X Offender, December 1977.
Biggest UK hit: Heart Of Glass, January 1979 (Number 1).

Named after the catcall that peroxide-maned chanteuse and ex-Playboy Bunny Debbie Harry would habitually elicit from New York City truck drivers, Blondie rose from the ashes of Manhattan glam troupe The Stilettos in the summer of 1974, becoming the punk era's most commercially successful act. But it would have taken a brave punter to back Blondie as the band to transcend the back-to-basics rock scene that burgeoned in seedy downtown dives such as CBGB's during the mid '70s. Indeed, their initially amateurish parodying of '60s girl groups and British Invasion pop, not to mention Harry's easiness on the eye, cut little ice with ascetic peers like Television and Patti Smith.

"We wanted to make the kind of records we grew up with." Gary Valentine

However, Blondie were integral to the Downtown scene. Harry and her guitarist boyfriend Chris Stein were "faces" among the tiny coterie who congregated at New York Dolls concerts and talked excitedly about David Bowie and Iggy Pop. And though they were living on the run-down Lower East Side, their sights were set on far more luxuriant vistas.

Employing Stilettos drummer Billy O'Connor and bassist Fred Smith, Blondie were, by summer 1974, regularly opening the bill at New York's principal underground venues, CBGB's and Max's Kansas City. But tangible success remained elusive and O'Connor soon departed, followed by Smith who joined Television.

Harry and Stein almost called it a day, but persisted thanks to the urgings of replacement drummer Clem Burke. Burke's New Jersey boyhood chum Gary Lachman (soon to be 'Valentine') then joined on bass. Burke and Valentine were still teenagers – a good 10 years Harry's junior – while Stein was already a veteran of 25. The mature couple's street smarts were as much a godsend to the new recruits as the latter's raw enthusiasm would be in resuscitating Blondie's fortunes. "We were kids," recalls Clem Burke. "Debbie and Chris, being older, were a bit more sussed."

With keyboardist Jimmy Destri recruited, the classic Blondie line-up was complete by spring 1975 and an intensive period of rehearsal at Harry and Stein's tiny Bowery apartment followed.

Soon a distinctive sound was being honed in which classic '60s garage rock was welded to hook-laden melodies and wry lyrics. A plethora of gigs that year forged a more convincing Blondie.

"You could sense something was building," remembers Burke. "Anyone in a band notices how you go from playing to five, to 10, to 100 people. But there was an energy there, seeing the likes of the Ramones, Television and so on, every week. It was a romantic time. Exciting things were constantly happening."

Along with musical confidence came visual homogeneity. The Blondie boys cut their hair and raided Manhattan's thrift stores for old suits and de rigueur skinny ties. Harry, meanwhile, perfected her own take on recycled glamour – taking to the stage in minute dresses made from discarded pillowcases and bin liners.

Signing to mainstream pop label Private Stock in 1976, Blondie cut the X Offender single and soon found themselves borne aloft by the updraft of interest in New York underground rock. "Making a record was a really big deal back then," says Burke. "It was sort of unobtainable. Seeing the New York Dolls in all their primitive glory made people realise that playing music like that could get you a record contract."

Blondie's big break then came when they were asked to tour the US with Iggy Pop at the beginning of 1977 on a successful nationwide perambulation. However, internecine temper tantrums were now frequently erupting between the volatile Destri, Stein and an increasingly ostracised Valentine.

Despite the critical success of 1977's eponymous, Richard Gottehrer-produced debut LP, things came to a head when the band were approached by über-pop manager Gary Leeds. Valentine, who had misgivings, delayed signing the managerial contract and soon found himself discarded.

Blondie's ascension continued regardless, and within a year they had recorded two hit singles-packed breakthrough albums and would soon be quitting the spit and sawdust of punk's basement for a permanent booking in pop's VIP penthouse.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Debbie Harry
Debbie (centre) became 'Deborah' Harry after the demise of Blondie Mk 1. A variable solo career spawned a brace of hits and there was a parallel diversion into film. Harry occasionally sings with The Jazz Passengers when not fronting the reformed Blondie.

Chris Stein
Stein (second right) spent much of the immediate post-Blondie period recovering from *emphigus vulgaris*, a potentially fatal skin disease. He was briefly well enough, however, to set up Animal Records – releasing albums by Iggy Pop and The Gun Club. Stein later turned his hand to production work. It was his idea to re-form Blondie at the end of the '90s.

Clem Burke
Burke (second left) is also part of Blondie Mk 2, and during the interim years has worked with everyone from Iggy Pop and Eurythmics to Nancy Sinatra and Mark Owen.

Jimmy Destri
After Blondie's dissipation, Destri (far left) has busied himself with recording a solo LP (Heart On A Wall) and assisting Steve Lillywhite on the production of U2's War. He left the music business soon after then hooked up with his old friends again in 1998, penning the chart-topping comeback single Maria.

Gary Valentine
Gary (far right) left Blondie in 1977 and moved to LA. After touring with Iggy Pop, Valentine went to college, ran an LA bookshop and became a writer. His biography New York Rocker has just been published. He lives in London.

PHOTOS: EBET ROBERTS (REDFERNS) / BOB GRUEN (STAR FILE)

Hurry up Harry: the face of Blondie gets all stoked up.

EYEWITNESS

1 January 1977
to 25 March 1977

By 1977, punk was moving towards the mainstream. The Sex Pistols, The Clash et al found their bandwagon had been jumped by the likes of The Police. But they still had a few cunning stunts up their sleeves...

With the turn of the new year, London's rapidly evolving punk scene moved into high gear. The first punk-only club opened its doors, a second generation of young punk bands (Eater, X-Ray Spex, The Boys) started to emerge along with a raft of non-punk bands (The Police, Squeeze, XTC) who astutely attached themselves to the phenomenon as a means of getting a foot on the ladder of success.

1 January 1977

London's first full-time punk venue, The Roxy, opens in Neal Street, Covent Garden. The Clash play at the opening.

Don Letts (Roxy DJ): Punk bands had nowhere to play. This guy Andy Czezowski (Acme accountant) got The Roxy together as a forum for all this new talent that was springing up everywhere.

Rat Scabies (drummer, The Damned): The Roxy was run the right way. Andy used to say, "It's your club, smash the toilets up, it's down to you, but it only means you won't have anywhere to piss next week." They used to smash them up anyway. People were sweating and pogoing about, but I never saw any real trouble among the punters. They never bothered to have bouncers at The Roxy.

Brian James (guitarist, The Damned): It was my favourite gig for a while, but it became a snobby scene. Once the clothes, the uniform, became more important than the audience, the punk scene went out the window.

Paul Weller (singer, The Jam): The Roxy myth is a load of bollocks. It was never a working-class street club. It was full of bourgeois idiots dressed up in Nazi gear.

Miles (of UK punk band London): I remember seeing Generation X there on one of the first

PHOTOS: ERICA ECHENBERG/REDFERNS

The Roxy, Covent Garden, London, 1977: the punk venue never employed bouncers as regulars stuck to the strict three-pogoing-at-one-time rule.

EYEWITNESS

nights. There were only about eight venues in the whole of London where you could hear that kind of music then. The audiences were always friendly. It was very small, had a tiny stage and people stood right in front of you. There was a good atmosphere and always the chance of members of the Pistols or the Clash turning up.

3 January 1977
Well-loved London pub venue The Hope & Anchor holds its Closing Down Concert. Artists appearing include Thin Lizzy members Phil Lynott, Scott Gorham, Brian Robertson and Gary Moore, plus The Damned's Rat Scabies, The Troggs and Larry Wallis.

4 January 1977
Tabloid hacks follow the Sex Pistols to Heathrow Airport, where they are to catch a flight to Amsterdam. An air hostess says: "These are the most revolting people I've ever seen. They called us filthy names and insulted everyone in sight. One of them was sick in a corridor." Banner headlines follow.

6 January 1977
EMI drops the Sex Pistols with a £40,000 golden handshake.

"The Roxy myth is a load of bollocks. It was never a working-class street club. It was full of bourgeois idiots dressed up in Nazi gear."
Paul Weller

Johnny Rotten: I don't know if you could ever put it down to any one reason, other than that we were considered bad for EMI's image. They saw themselves as a family-oriented record company... why can't we just be nice? At the EMI office everybody was in suits and ties. It was absurd.

Chris Parry (A&R man, Polydor): After the EMI/A&M debacle the Pistols' manager Malcolm McLaren came and saw me and offered the Sex Pistols to Polydor on the same deal as we'd originally planned months earlier, before they signed to EMI. Unfortunately, Polydor's MD Freddy Hayen felt he needed to clear it with the Phillips board who controlled Polydor and they refused to entertain the idea. I still maintain a friendship with Malcolm and it's fair to say, despite all his talent, he did not appreciate the musical worth of the band at the time. As the circus unfolded, with him as the ring-master, events took over that spiralled the band into self-destruction. It was a crucial error of judgement.

8 January 1977
The Sex Pistols have a meeting to discuss the future of Glen Matlock.

Glen Matlock: After we got back from Amsterdam, I had a meeting with our manager, Malcolm McLaren, and the rest in Food For Thought, a vegetarian caff in Covent Garden that we used to go to. Malcolm wanted me to pretend that I liked John and stay in the band, but I couldn't do that. Mike Thorne of EMI knew about the deteriorating

International jet trash: (from left) Vivienne Westwood, Malcolm McLaren, Siouxsie Sioux, Steve Severin, Steve Jones and Paul Cook wait for their flight to Amsterdam. Heathrow Airport, 4 January, 1977.

situation in the band, and he was already offering me a solo deal, so I could see that there was future for me outside the band, if I wanted it.

9 January 1977

Having recently met, ex-Curved Air drummer Stewart Copeland and former Last Exit bassist Sting begin an association that will result in the creation of The Police.

Stewart Copeland (drummer, The Police): I was on tour with Curved Air. We had a night off and a local journalist took me around to see his favourite local group, which was a jazz group called Last Exit in which Sting was the bass player and singer. The group were terrible, but Sting was great. Later on, disenchanted with the music industry and dreaming of setting up a small group that could pay its own bills and be its own boss, I called up Sting and asked him to join me in a group.

12 January 1977

The Police rehearse for the first time in drummer Stewart Copeland's London flat. Henri Padovani is on guitar.

Stewart Copeland: (Guitarist) Henri (Padovani) only knew how to play about three chords. He had a nice feel but he wasn't very technically proficient.

Johnny Rotten of the Sex Pistols is arrested during rehearsals in Soho for possession of illegal drugs – crushed diet pills.

16 January 1977

London punk quartet The Boys sign a five-year deal with NEMS, thus becoming the first UK punk band to secure an album deal.

23 January 1977

Patti Smith breaks several vertebrae in her neck after falling off the stage in Tampa, Florida.

29 January 1977

NME reports that, during the previous week, Pete Townshend of The Who was involved in a confrontation with Steve Jones and Paul Cook of the Sex Pistols.

Pete Townshend (guitarist, The Who): We went to the Speakeasy and, lo and behold, two of the Sex Pistols were there. I fell on them like a hungry wolf and what they got was my anger

PHOTOS: RAY STEVENSON, LFI

Hugh Cornwell of The Stranglers (above): strangely GLC officials objected to his T-shirt but not his trendy teacher jacket-and-jeans combo. (Inset top left) Paul Cook and Steve Jones tell a pissed-off Townshend they really like "The Ooo".

and frustration at having been fucked up the arse by this guy that I hated [Allan Klein]. I was saying to them, "Rock'n'roll is something good. If you can make something good of it, take it, but I have been degraded, humiliated and ultimately tortured and tossed aside like a rag by this industry." And their response was, "Oh. What a shame. We really like The Ooo." And it just made me so angry! I ran out in the street and at 2.30 or 3.30 in the morning I was in Oxford Street, asleep in a doorway. A policeman woke me up.

3 February 1977

London punk band The Boys record their first single, I Don't Care, in a studio in Ecclestone Street, Victoria, London.

6 February 1977

Peter Laughner of US punk godfathers Pere Ubu dies aged 25.

8 February 1977

The Climax Blues Band play at The Rainbow, London, supported by The Stranglers, whose set is dramatically cut short when power is cut off by GLC officials after singer Hugh Cornwell comes onstage wearing a T-shirt bearing the slogan 'Fuck'.

10 February 1977

The Clash arrive at CBS Studios, London, to start work on their eponymous debut album.

Mick Jones (guitarist/vocalist, The Clash): I was so into speed I don't even recall making the first album.

Simon Humphrey (engineer): They wouldn't shake my hand because I was a hippy. There was a rivalry between Mick and Joe. One of them would turn up and say, "Who else is here?" And I'd say, "Actually, Mick, you're the first one." He'd say, "Fuck that!" and bugger off. Then Joe would turn up and say, "Where's Mick?" And I would say, "He was here earlier, but he left." So Joe would say, "Bloody hell!" and storm off. Then they'd all reconvene later on.

Keith Levene (guitarist, The Clash): Mick had the main body, the foundation of the songs. The one tune I totally wrote on my own was What's My Name. That's when I mastered how to write a song. "Oh, that's how you do it. It's so easy!" I didn't play at all on the album but they credited me for some reason for What's My Name as a third credit. And they didn't credit me on anything else. And I wrote a lot of that other stuff. I contributed to it. Those songs wouldn't sound the way they did if I hadn't contributed to them. I didn't contribute that much to 1977 and White Riot cos those are the things we literally split up over. But all the other stuff I did. I should have at least gotten a third credit on the other tunes and full credit on What's My Name. And they've never paid me for it either.

12 February 1977

The Police go into Pathway Studios, London, to record their first single, Fall Out.

THE CAST LIST

Stewart Copeland

Copeland grew up in Beirut but came to England in 1966. After a stint with prog outfit Curved Air, he formed The Police with Sting in 1977. Despite their diverse musical backgrounds and technical proficiency, the band honed their act on the punk rock circuit before becoming early-'80s chart-busters and eventually splitting in 1985.

Derek Green

Managing director of A&M Records. Signed the Pistols in January 1977, after the EMI debacle, but was unable to maintain a working relationship with the band.

Pete Townshend

Legendary guitar-smasher, famed for windmill technique. Although Townshend's quest for the quintessential English sound guaranteed their proto-punk credentials, by 1977 The Who came to epitomise everything that punks hated about the older generation of rockers.

Rat Scabies

Chris Miller (above) was dubbed the Rat by fellow London SS member Brian James. The pair formed The Damned with Captain Sensible and Dave Vanian and signed to Stiff Records in 1976. Internal tensions came to a head in October '77 when Rat departed, accusing James of being a dictator. He returned to the fold in a 1978 line-up minus James.

EYEWITNESS

15 February 1977

The Sex Pistols fire bassist Glen Matlock, apparently because he has professed a liking for The Beatles. His replacement will be Sid Vicious.

Johnny Rotten: Malcolm would tend to say one thing to one person and another to another, and you would believe the information you were being given. Glen's right when he says Malcolm set us off against each other. When you're young, you don't see the wood for the trees.

The Jam are signed to Polydor Records by A&R man Chris Parry.

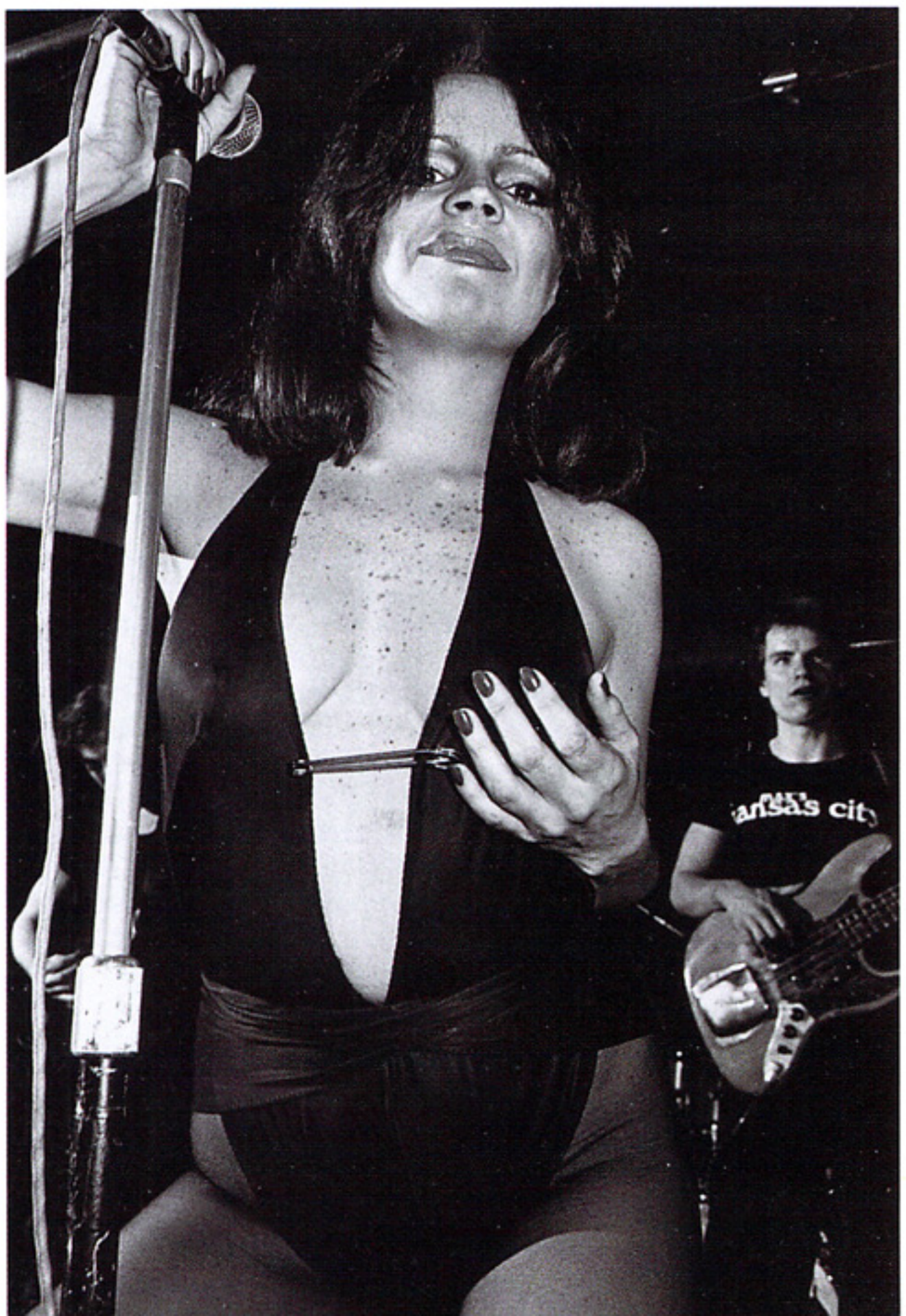
Roger Armstrong (co-founder, Chiswick Records): Every record company wanted their own punk band. We had a meeting with Paul Weller and his dad, John, to finalise a contract. They were going to ink it virtually the next day, but Parry phoned up and said, "I'll sign you." Cos he'd lost The Clash. If (Clash manager) Bernie (Rhodes) had waited a couple of days, we might have had The Jam. It's funny that all the people in punk said they wanted to change the world, but they really just wanted a major record deal.

19 February 1977

In the Annual NME Readers' Poll, the Sex Pistols are voted Turkey Of The Year, but Johnny Rotten is Most Wonderful Human Being.

The Stranglers release their duo-bracketed first single, (Get A) Grip (On Yourself) in the UK. It will peak at Number 44.

Hugh Cornwell, (singer, The Stranglers): Our records were never typically punk, but we had that aggression that comes from two years of doing gigs where the audience would throw bottles at us, attack us, or stage mass walkouts. Nobody who booked us wanted us to play again.



Sting played for both American punkette Cherry Vanilla (below) and Wayne County (right). What did Mr Tantric Sex think of Wayne's microphone technique?

24 February 1977

Siouxsie And The Banshees play their first real gig (not counting the 100 Club Festival) at The Red Deer, Croydon, supporting The Heartbreakers.

Nils Stevenson (Siouxsie's manager): I was just so nervous, so were the band. Sioux's voice was cracking and I just got as pissed as I could. I couldn't cope with listening to it. Everyone came away patting each other on the back, saying, "It was brilliant." One of those things, first gig. You've got to pretend it was good. So that was that, over, and everyone was relieved.

3 March 1977

When US punkette Cherry Vanilla plays at The Roxy, Covent Garden, London, her backing band includes Sting and Stewart Copeland, who also provide the support with their own band, The Police.

4 March 1977

Johnny Thunders And The Heartbreakers play at The Roxy, London, supported by The Police.

5 March 1977

Wayne County And The Electric Chairs play at The Roxy, London, supported by The Police.

8 March 1977

The Sex Pistols formally sign to A&M Records at the London offices of A&M's publishing arm, Rondor Music.

10 March 1977

The Sex Pistols stage a press stunt – a faked signing to A&M outside Buckingham Palace, London.

Derek Green (Managing Director, A&M): When Malcolm McLaren approached me in January 1977, he was coming to probably the only record label boss in London who had never heard the Sex Pistols but, when he piayed me the music, I loved it. Never Mind The Bollocks is still one of my all-time favourite albums. The other companies were hesitating because of the Pistols' reputation, but I went after them harder than anything.

Alan McGhee (plugger, A&M): We were just amazed that we'd signed this band. A&M was like a family label. We had The Carpenters and Supertramp, and then suddenly we had the Sex Pistols. But Derek had realised that we needed something like that to bring us up to date.

Kit Buckler (Head of Press, A&M): A couple of weeks before the official signing, we had a meeting in Derek's office. It was all very orderly and logical, which was Malcolm McLaren's style. He was a remarkably well-organised guy. But he does have a tendency to claim credit for things he didn't do, like the Buckingham Palace idea. We were kicking ideas around in the meeting and, as the first A&M single was to be God Save The Queen, I suggested we should just go for the most outrageous option and do a signing photocall at Buck House.

Brian Harrigan (journalist, Melody Maker): McLaren had invited us all by telegram. They arrived late, in a Daimler, and circled the island twice, giving V-signs and pulling faces at us. Then they stopped and some heavies got out of another car behind them and set up a rickety old trestle table.

Alan McGhee: We had anticipated that the police would move us along pretty smartly, so we knew the whole thing had to happen fast. The guys signed the papers and it was all over in maybe 10 minutes. The police seemed more bemused by it than anything. They didn't seem to know who the band was.

Chalkie Davies (photographer): About then a big blue police van rolled up with more coppers in it, and this lot seemed to understand what kind of stunt was being pulled, so we were outnumbered and we just legged it away as fast as we could.

Derek Green: After the signing, we piled into the cars and drove to the Apex Room at the Regent Palace Hotel in Piccadilly, where we were to hold the official press conference.

Sid Vicious: We were all riding in the back of this big limousine pissed out of our heads. Me and John beat Cook up, giving him a black eye – it was a right laugh. Malcolm's over in one corner screaming, "Help! Help!" and we were all beating the fuck out of each other.

Derek Green: The press conference was even more uncomfortable than the stunt had been. I had to sit on the same stage with them. I can remember inching my chair back so I wouldn't attract attention. Unfortunately, a foreign journalist spotted me and asked a question but, just as I was about to reply, Sid let off a huge fart, which was the best possible answer anyway.

Brian Harrigan: When the official press conference was over, we were given a chance to grab a Pistol each for a quick chat. There was a huge queue for Johnny, so I went for the new boy, Sid. He looked like an alien. Skin like parchment, unbelievably thin, seemed to have no eyeballs. He had a bottle of Smirnoff in his hand but, when he spoke, the image shattered. I asked him what he'd say to critics of the Sex Pistols and he replied, "I wouldn't say anything. I'd just biff them on the nose." It was comical, almost P.G. Wodehouse.

Derek Green: The way they treated the press was breathtaking. I couldn't decide whether it

PHOTOS: RETNA, RAY STEVENSON

Cunning stunt! The Pistols stage their signing to A&M outside Buckingham Palace, 10 March 1977.

was good or bad, because it was just totally new behaviour, something I'd never seen before. Still, we seemed to have achieved what we'd set out to do, and I had acquired a deep respect for McLaren and his ability to manipulate.

Kit Buckler: They came back to A&M afterwards. I remember watching Sid throwing up in the toilets.

Alan McGhee: They were just utterly obnoxious and disgusting. Johnny Rotten molested a secretary called Kim. One of them went to the ladies' loo and smashed a window. He must have cut his arm cos there was blood everywhere.

11 March 1977

The Buzzcocks play their first gig without former frontman Howard Devoto at The Coliseum, Harlesden, London.

12 March 1977

The Sex Pistols become involved in a scuffle with UK TV DJ Bob Harris at The Speakeasy, London.

Bob Harris (presenter, Old Grey Whistle Test): I was the epitome of everything they hated. Jah Wobble was with them and he asked me when the Pistols would be on the Whistle Test. I said it wasn't something I wanted to discuss and he took a swing at me. All hell broke loose. Glasses were shattered, Sid slashed George [Whistle Test engineer] on the head. I was knocked to the floor and my back was cut. I was backed up against a wall with these guys coming towards me. I started trying to reason with them. Fortunately, we got out. I took George to a hospital in Hammersmith. He needed 14 stitches.

14 March 1977

Richard Hell And The Voidoids begin three weeks of recording their debut album, Blank Generation, in New York.

Richard Hell: That was the first time we recorded it. We did it first at Electric Ladyland in March, where we were all very energised because it was our first time in a really good 16-track studio. I think we spent about $20,000 recording it over about three weeks. Then its release got delayed several months because Sire was switching distributors. I lost faith in those versions, so we did it again in June at the Plaza, an historic studio on top of the Rockefeller Center where they used to record the NBC Orchestra. That was great, except that the 1977 blackout happened during recording and we had to walk down 30 flights of stairs in the pitch black to get out. Blank Generation came about because, years earlier, Rod McKuen had recorded a thing called I Belong To The Beat Generation and Blank Generation was our little joke, our take on that. But I did mean it. I wanted to write a song, like Blue Suede Shoes or My Generation, that defined the unique style of a generation.

15 March 1977

When US punk vocalist Cherry Vanilla plays at Dingwalls, Camden Lock, London, her support act, The Police, are paid £25.

18 March 1977

The Clash release their debut single, White Riot, in the UK.

Paul Weller: It was only when I started listening to The Clash that I thought I should sing as naturally as I talked and that The Jam should be a very English-sounding band.

19 March 1977

Following the Bob Harris incident at The Speakeasy, the Sex Pistols are sacked by A&M Records.

Derek Green: I rang up Jerry Moss, the co-owner of A&M, in LA, and told him I was resigning. I said I still felt that the band was right, the music was great, but I just couldn't handle the personal side of it. Someone said I must have lost my nerve. Fair comment. Jerry was amazing. He said, "Derek, what you're really doing is asking us to choose between you and them. We know you. We trust you. Drop them."

Malcolm McLaren (manager, Sex Pistols): I don't believe the Speakeasy affair was the real reason. I think it's more a case of industrial blackmail, involving dissent from other artists on the A&M label who couldn't associate themselves with the Pistols' behaviour. I know for a fact that A&M received a rude telex from Rick Wakeman complaining about the Pistols' deal. Our lawyer advised us to sign the A&M release document because, if we insisted on sticking to the contract, they would simply have refused to issue any of our product.

25 March 1977

Elvis Costello releases his first single, Less Than Zero.

TIME CAPSULE

Ushered in by the Morecambe and Wise Christmas Special, the new year brings pogo stick mania for kids. Minus the stick, pogoing becomes punk's official dance. Also...

10 January

Clive Sinclair launches a two-inch television going for £175.

15 January

David Soul tops the UK singles chart with Don't Give Up On Us.

17 January

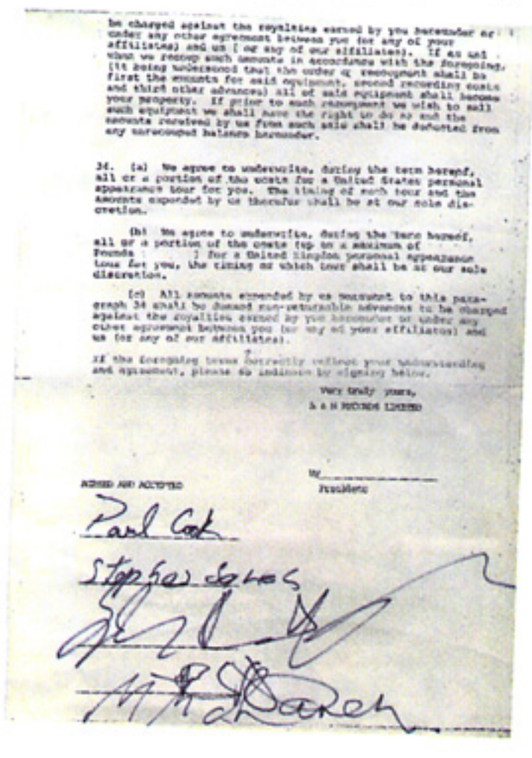
Murderer Gary Gilmore is executed in the US.

24 February

The Tories triumph at the Westminster by-election.

28 March

Two Boeing 747 jumbo jets collide on the runway at Tenerife killing 574.



be charged against the royalties earned by you hereunder or under any other agreement between you (or any of your affiliates) and us (or any of our affiliates). If at any time we recoup such amounts in accordance with the foregoing, (it being understood that the order of recoupment shall be first the amounts for said equipment, second recording costs and third other advances) all of said equipment shall become your property. If prior to such recoupment we wish to sell such equipment we shall have the right to do so and the amounts received by us from such sale shall be deducted from any unrecouped balance hereunder.

34. (a) We agree to underwrite, during the term hereof, all or a portion of the costs for a United States personal appearance tour for you. The timing of such tour and the amounts expended by us therefor shall be at our sole discretion.

(b) We agree to underwrite, during the term hereof, all or a portion of the costs (up to a maximum of Pounds) for a United Kingdom personal appearance tour for you, the timing of which tour shall be at our sole discretion.

(c) All amounts expended by us pursuant to this paragraph 34 shall be deemed non-returnable advances to be charged against the royalties earned by you hereunder or under any other agreement between you (or any of your affiliates) and us (or any of our affiliates).

If the foregoing terms correctly reflect your understanding and agreement, please so indicate by signing below.

Very truly yours,

A & M RECORDS LIMITED

By_____
President

AGREED AND ACCEPTED:

Paul Cook

Steve Jones

14th March

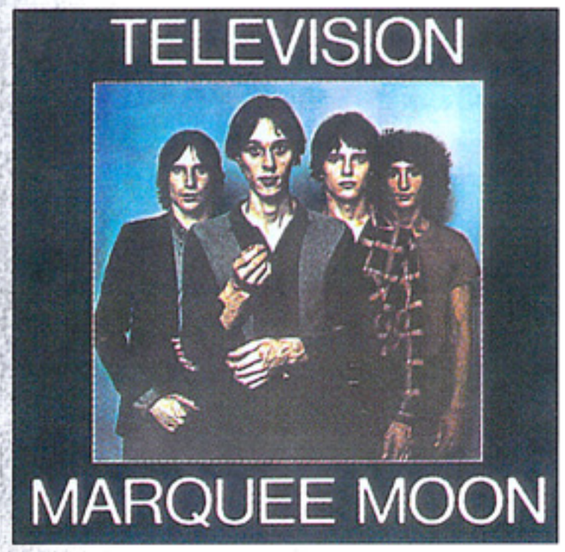
Class of '77

TELEVISION

Though falling short of their true potential, New York's Television opened the door for the most influential of punk's future generation. By David Sheppard.

THE FILE

Personnel: Tom Verlaine (vocals/guitar), Richard Lloyd (guitar), Fred Smith (bass), Billy Ficca (drums).
Hometown: New York City
Formed: 1973
The gameplan: To invest the visceral guitar interplay of The Byrds and The Velvet Underground with the untrammelled flights of free jazz – while smoking French fags and looking scarecrow thin.
First gig: March 1974, Townhouse Theatre, New York.
First record: Little Johnny Jewel Parts 1 & 2, October 1975.
Biggest UK hit: Prove It (number 25), July 1977.



Thomas Miller and Richard Meyers were rebellious school friends in the mid-'60s who – after abortive attempts to run away from their Delaware alma mater – finally swapped formal education for the squalid bohemia of New York's Lower East Side at the decade's twilight. Styling themselves Verlaine (after the French symbolist poet Paul) and Hell, respectively, the duo tried their hands at poetry while Verlaine – a gifted guitarist schooled equally in garage rock and free jazz – increasingly turned to music.

By 1972 Verlaine was leading The Neon Boys with boyhood pal Billy Ficca on drums and Hell on rudimentary bass. Hell's sartorial penchant for ripped clothing notwithstanding, the band's blend of '60s garage punk and proto-punk anthems attracted little interest. Verlaine wanted another guitarist to off-set Hell's musical limitations and eventually teenage prodigy Richard Lloyd was recruited via the auspices of Terry Ork – the unheralded power behind the throne of New York punk.

When they split in 1978, Television left their peers to clean up the charts.

"Ork was our first manager," Lloyd recalls, "he introduced me to Tom Verlaine and Richard Hell, and he was the single person most responsible for the entire New York scene of the late '70s. Terry had worked for Andy Warhol at The Factory and admired Andy's support of the arts including his relationship to The Velvet Underground. Terry wanted to have a band and he told me about another fellow who played electric guitar and asked me if I'd like to meet him. Shortly after meeting him, Tom Verlaine, we formed Television with Terry as our manager."

The newly re-christened band made their debut in spring 1974 – though booking gigs in Manhattan was problematic for an unsigned group. Strolling along The Bowery after a rehearsal one evening, Verlaine and Lloyd chanced upon a dingy club called CBGB's ('Cool Bands, Great Beer') and casually asked owner Hilly Kristal if they could get a gig there. Having reassured Kristal that they played 'country music', Television made their CBGB's debut on 31 March 1974 and inadvertently opened the gates to an influential generation of bands for whom CBGB's would be their salon, stage and sanctuary.

Lloyd's driving, riff-based approach dovetailed spectacularly with Verlaine's more idiosyncratic guitar style and throughout 1974 Television began to turn heads for reasons other than Hell's Swiss cheese shirts. The latter's bass-playing frailties, however, were slowing the band's ascent. Verlaine was also growing tired of his cohort's crazed onstage pyrotechnics and gradually ostracised him by refusing to play any of Hell's songs.

By 1975 Blondie's Fred Smith had replaced Hell and Television were recording their first single – the lo-fi Iggy Pop homage Little Johnny Jewel, arguably the first 'indie-rock' single.

"In the '70s, we thought it was so stupid to go shopping things around," remembers Verlaine. "We considered starting our own record company, and actually we should have kept it going because we'd have made 10 times as much money. We recorded a song called Little Johnny Jewel on a four-track – it was almost like a rap song, just a riff with me talking on it – and the oddest magazines, like Penthouse, gave little write-ups because I think they were equally fed up with what the record companies were doing. So this got written up in the most unlikely places, and they all printed the address so we sold thousands of these through the mail."

With their star rising, the band's oeuvre swelled to include the lengthy guitar epiphany of Marquee Moon and the splendidly baroque Venus and See No Evil – esoteric music with little precedence in rock but with sufficient visceral thrills to excite fans of more prosaic contemporaries like the Ramones and Blondie.

By the spring of 1976, Television were signed to Elektra and were recording their landmark debut Marquee Moon with Led Zeppelin alumnus Andy Johns. Released in early 1977 Marquee Moon proved to be a massive critical success – charting in the UK and Scandinavia – and for a while it looked like Television were destined for stadium ascendancy. That it didn't happen is partly due to Tom Verlaine's legendary hauteur and the fact that their hastily written follow-up – 1978's Adventure – couldn't hope to compete with its predecessor's time-honed song craft.

By late 1978 the band most instrumental in launching New York punk had split, leaving their peers to clean up in the charts and the critical columns. They reformed briefly in 1993 to cut an eponymous third album and continue to gig sporadically.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Tom Verlaine
Tom (second right) still resides in New York. He is occasionally prized away from his Chelsea apartment to go record shopping with celebrity fans like Thurston Moore. As well as having an intermittent solo career, he's written film music and recently played a string of US shows improvising over obscure black and white movies. He hasn't released a record since 1993, though rumour suggests he has new product in the can. No label, it seems, is willing to meet his not inconsiderable remunerative demands.

Richard Lloyd
Maintaining a steady if unremarkable post-Television solo career, Lloyd (second left) successfully battled drug problems to release a clutch of albums that focused heavily on his blues-based guitar virtuosity. A much-lauded sideman, his searing contributions to Matthew Sweet's records – among others – continue to attract admirers. Lives in Manhattan where he supplements his income by giving guitar master-classes.

Fred Smith
Smith (far left) has followed Tom Verlaine's solo career like a shadow, playing bass and often co-producing his erstwhile leader's records. Instrumental in keeping the reformed Television from hitting each other, he now makes his own music at home on computers.

Billy Ficca
Ficca (far right) left Television in '78 and joined Boston band The Waitresses. After drifting away from music, he was coaxed back to play on Verlaine's 1992 instrumental LP, Warm And Cool, and with the reformed Television.

PHOTOS: BOB GRUEN, BARRY PLUMMER

TV personality:
Television's Tom Verlaine.

PUNK MAGAZINE

Digging The 'Zine

They dreamt of stuffing Rolling Stone. But, as Punk magazine founder John Holmstrom tells Paul Stokes, fate and a dodgy printer had other ideas.

John Holmstrom

"The idea was to do a rock'n'roll comic book. I'd always read underground comic books and I was a big rock'n'roll fan so it just seemed to be a natural to put them together," explains John Holmstrom, editor, illustrator, writer, designer and all-round dog's body of Punk magazine, the 1976-1979 New York-based publication which, with its bold illustrations and hand-written articles, ignited the punk fanzine scene.

A graduate of the New York School Of Visual Arts, Holmstrom got together with film-maker Eddie McNeil and college student Ged Dunn in the summer of 1975, to first plot the magazine.

"Eddie suggested I did some house painting for Ged that summer while he was making a movie with Eddie," explains Holmstrom. "We got talking about working together, then that October when I'd had some illustrations published and Eddie was doing another film, Ged dropped out of college and we opened up offices the next month."

With no thought other than for getting one issue out, the trio had noted the blossoming CBGB's club scene and knew their title was perfect for its times.

"Ged was always talking about decades defining themselves in the middle," recalls Holmstrom. "In the '40s it was the war, in the '50s it was rock'n'roll, and the '60s were defined by the period from '65 to '67. We knew the CBGB's scene was hot so I guess it was the right place, the right time and the right idea."

Punk's impact was instant. It was a success helped greatly by having Lou Reed on the first cover and by the unique visuals and articles running throughout the magazine that Holmstrom and his collaborators supplied.

"We printed on New Year's Eve 1975, and then had to hand-fold and collate the issues a couple of days later," recalls Holmstrom. "So Eddie [who, by now, was going under his punk moniker, Legs McNeil] went out into the street with a couple of copies and the first people he approached went, Wow, it's like a new Rolling Stone. Within a week The Village Voice called us The New Zeitgeist, which we had to look up in the dictionary, but it was exactly what we wanted to be."

Quickly imported into Britain by Rough Trade, Punk became the direct inspiration for native titles like Ripped And Torn and Sniffin' Glue, even indirectly funding them. "Rough Trade were selling Punk at quite a premium over there," explains Holmstrom, "and with the profits they bought a photocopy machine which helped some UK fanzines get started."

Indeed, Punk, led by Legs McNeil's stories about his punk rock behaviour, was an inspiration to British punks generally. "Chris Stein from Blondie came back from Britain and told us how everyone was going mad for Punk," says Holmstrom. "Legs did a story about throwing up in a subway car and Chris said kids were now deliberately throwing up on trains because they thought it must be punk."

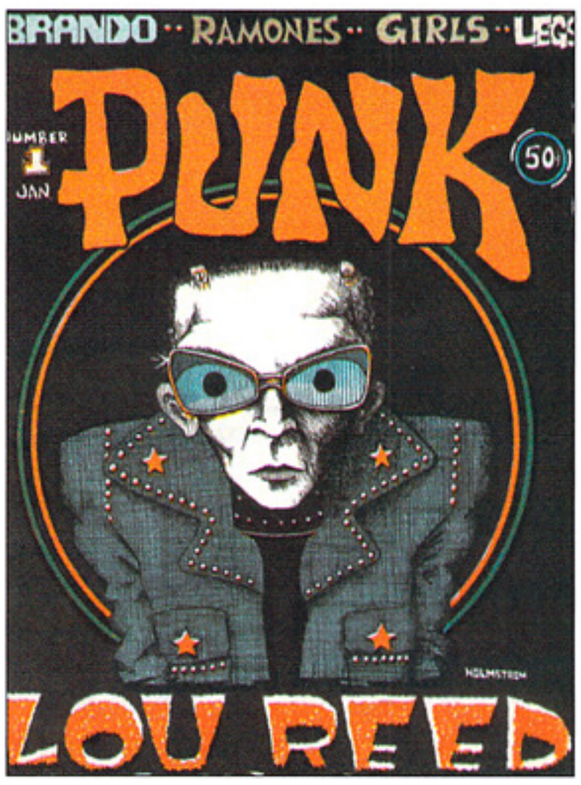
Ironically, Punk was neither a fanzine nor particularly wedded to the punk rock scene. Holmstrom had ambitions of turning the magazine into a challenger to Rolling Stone, and attempts were made to move the magazine away from the CBGB's scene, though these all seemed eerily cursed. "Every time we tried to expand beyond punk rock a disaster happened," recalls Holmstrom. "Issue nine had Kiss on the cover and that would have really put us over the top, but the printer disappeared with all our money and artwork. To this day it's frustrating."

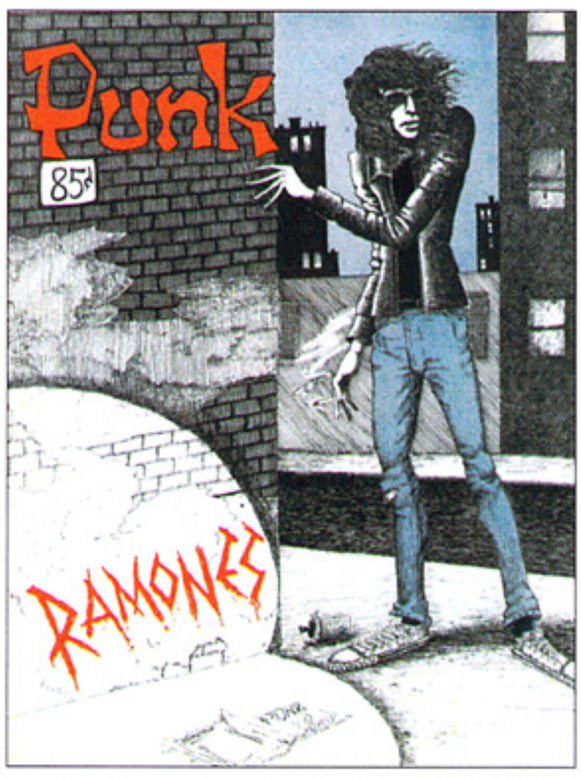
With the New York scene's decline and home-grown efforts swamping the British market, Punk began to lose influence, with advertising dwindling rather than readers. Even the final issue in 1979 sold well, but the fortune the team dreamed the title would yield never materialised and Punk was forced to close.

Punk, however, never fully died, a special edition accompanied the release of the 1980 punk film DOA, and a Best Of Punk book appeared in the '80s, and now Holmstrom has just relaunched Punk with the same values and philosophy intact 25 years on.

Proud of the magazine's influence, Holmstrom rightly identifies it as the era's original and superior product. "The fanzines were great, but nobody put in as much effort as us," he explains. "We figured if we put out a good magazine eventually good things would come."

For further details on Punk magazine see www.punkmagazine.com





▶ ISSUE ONE, LOU REED
January 1976

"Lou Reed had just released Metal Machine Music, which I thought was the greatest record ever made. A double album of feedback, how more punk can you be? I always thought that was the clarion call to start punk, so Lou kicked it all off unintentionally. He was originally going to look like an insect on the cover, but ended up too much like a butterfly, too hippy, so I turned him into Frankenstein's monster because that was an image Lester Bangs had once used. Lou had forgotten about doing the interview, so he just suddenly saw it walking down the street and totally flipped, he just loved it."

▶ ISSUE THREE, THE RAMONES
April 1976

"Comic books occasionally do issues similar to this, with just a few things on the cover, and they always tended to be the best. I tried to make it look like the Ramones sounded; urban, gritty. That's the first issue on the floor, but I'm not sure if that's supposed to mean anything, I guess we were trying to get back to that issue because I thought the second issue was too hippy-dippy and I wanted to make it more like Punk magazine than some pretentious New York art mag. In many ways, that was our best issue."

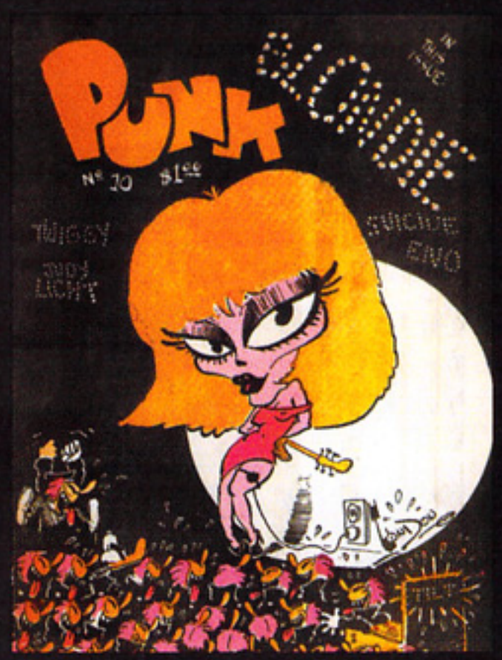
PHOTO: ROBERTA BAYLEY

▶ ISSUE EIGHT, SEX PISTOLS
March 1977

"A guy called Steve Taylor did this cover. Instead of drawing with a pen, he'd use an ink dropper or a broken quill and scribble with that and get ink all over the place, he didn't want a firm control over the ink. Mary Harron's [now a director whose films include American Psycho] interview was astounding. It's the only time I've ever heard Johnny Rotten talk candidly, he's sincere about everything."

◀ ISSUE FOUR, IGGY POP
July 1976

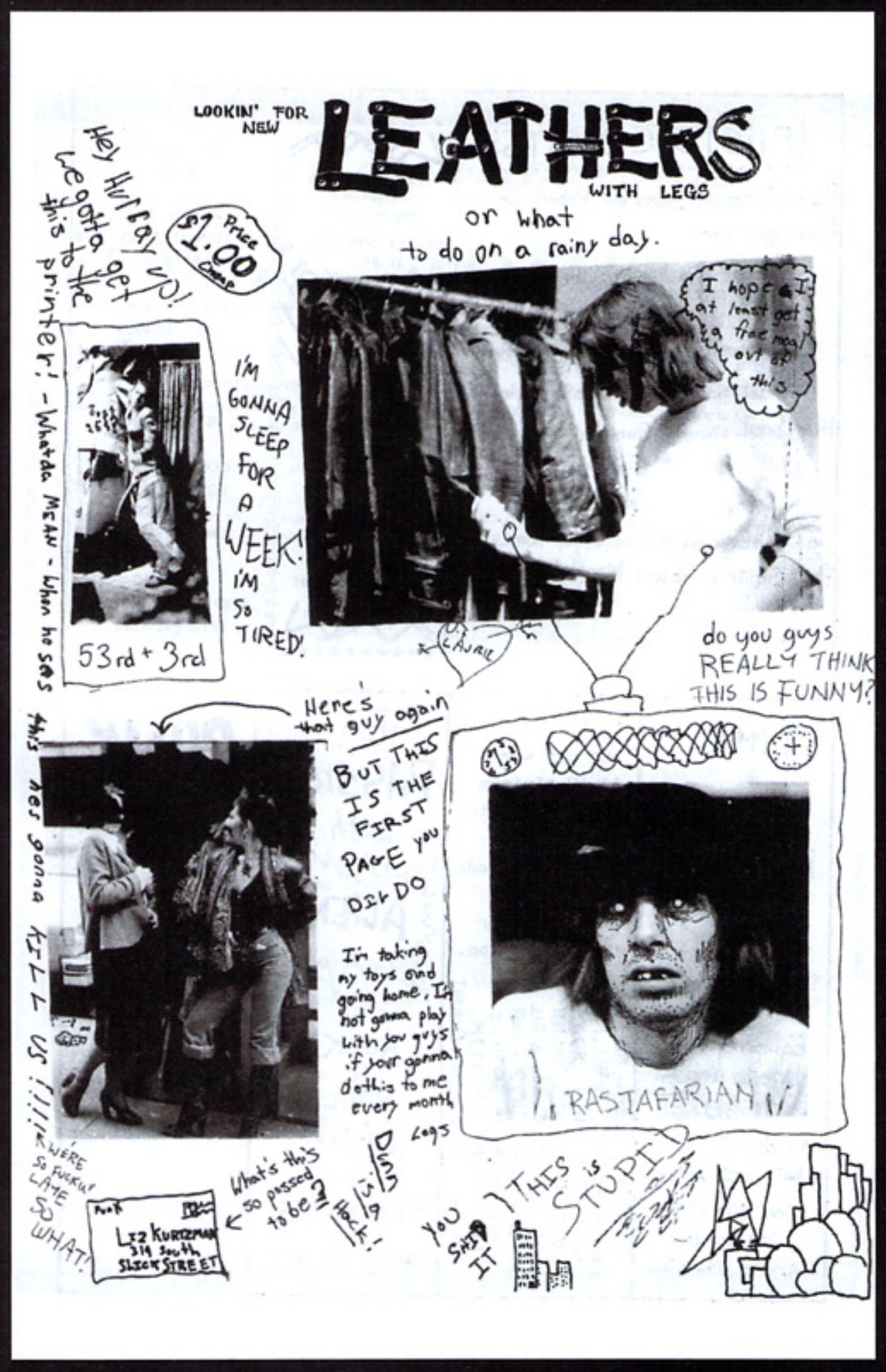
"I wanted to make Iggy look like the Incredible Hulk, plus make it very commercial too, because I wanted it to look like a magazine everyone would buy. I believed comics and rock had similar heritage; it all started in the '40s, they were the two popular art forms that grew up in America together and they were getting closer and closer. This seemed the perfect match. It was Iggy's first interview after coming out of hiding and working with Bowie."

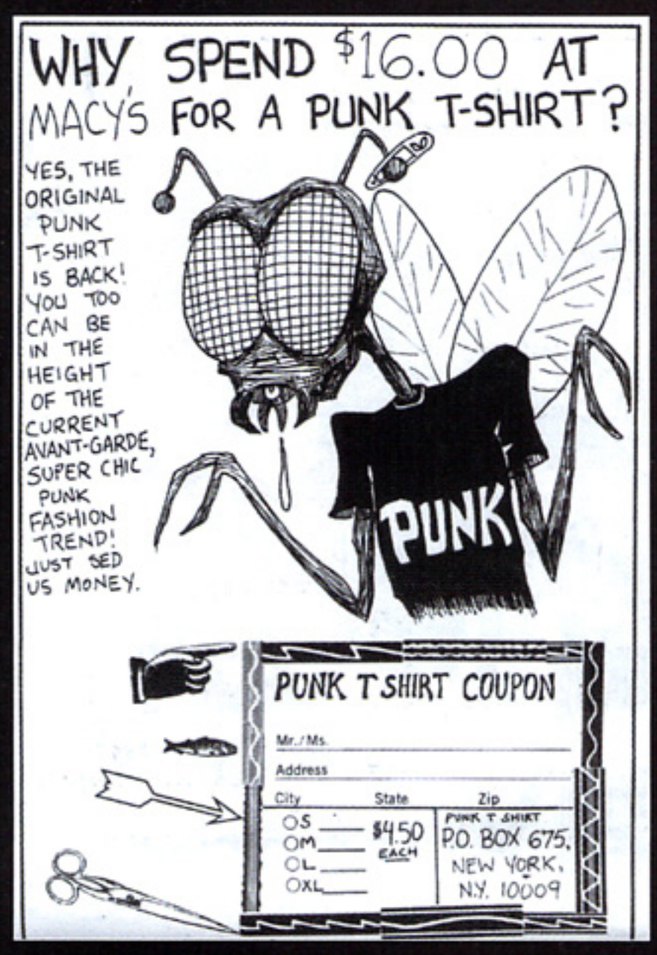


◀ ISSUE 10, BLONDIE
Summer 1977

"Bobby London did this cover as I was too busy. This was our benefit issue after issue nine disappeared. We had a show at CBGB's with Patti Smith, Blondie, The Dictators, The Cramps and Lester Bangs' first stage appearance with Radio Birdman. It got us $2,000 which meant we could bring out a few thousand copies of this and stay alive. It was a big seller."

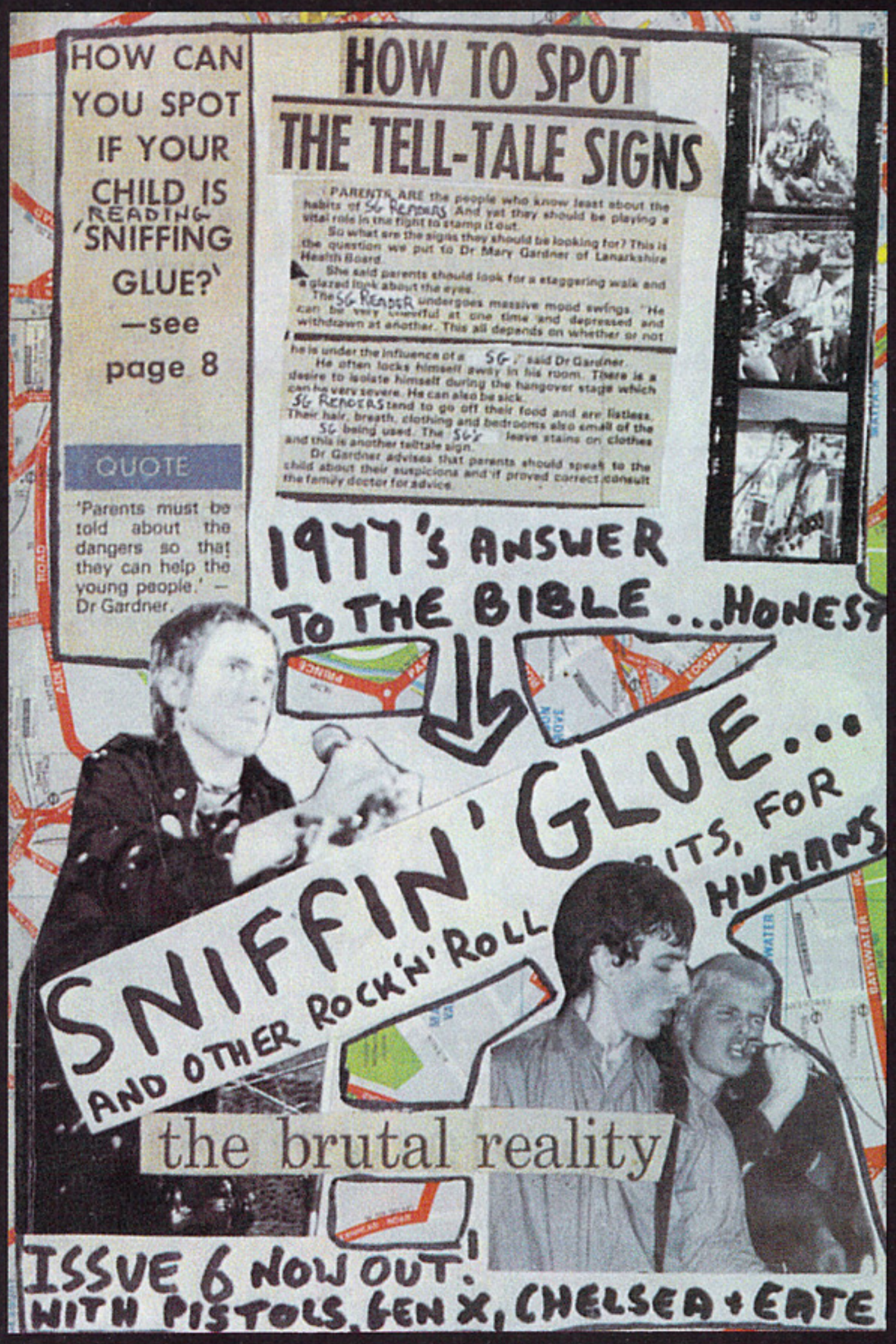
"We were dubbed The New Zeitgeist. We had to look it up, but it was exactly what we wanted to be."

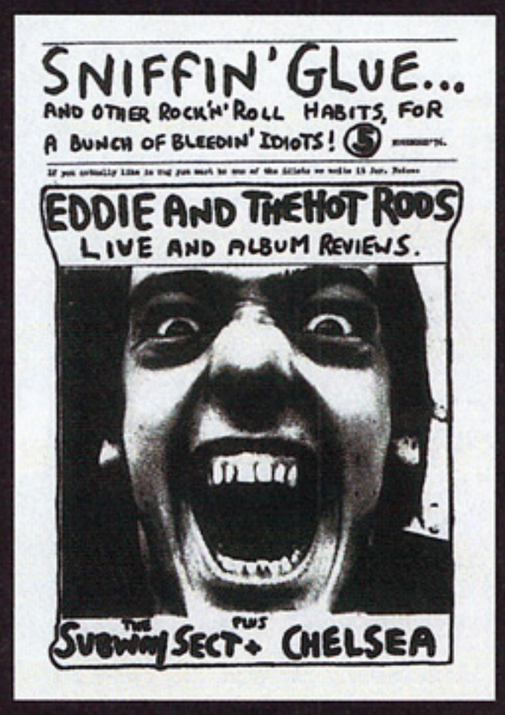


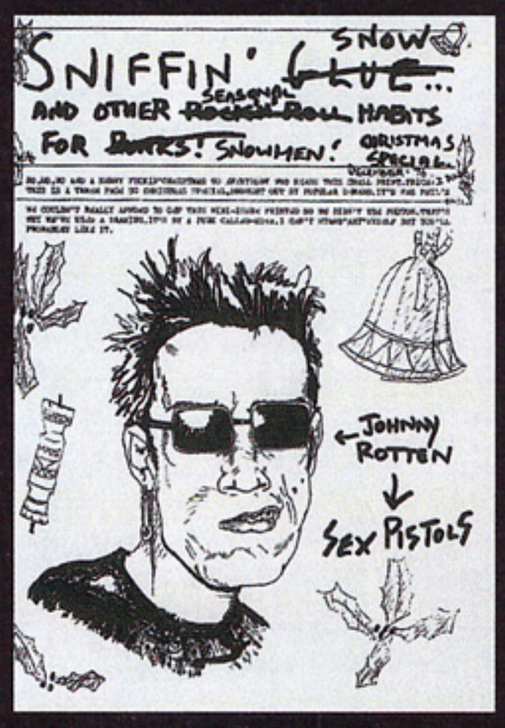


◀ LEATHERS WITH LEGS
"We wanted to be more than just music, so we thought we'd do fashion. We did this big photo shoot with models buying leathers, but when the pictures came back we were like, Oh my God, this is the most pretentious, horrible thing, we can't run this. So after a few beers we just started destroying the pictures. We thought, We can't publish this, but Ged was like, Why not? When it was published it looked great. It seemed that with the magazine, the cruder we got the better it looked."

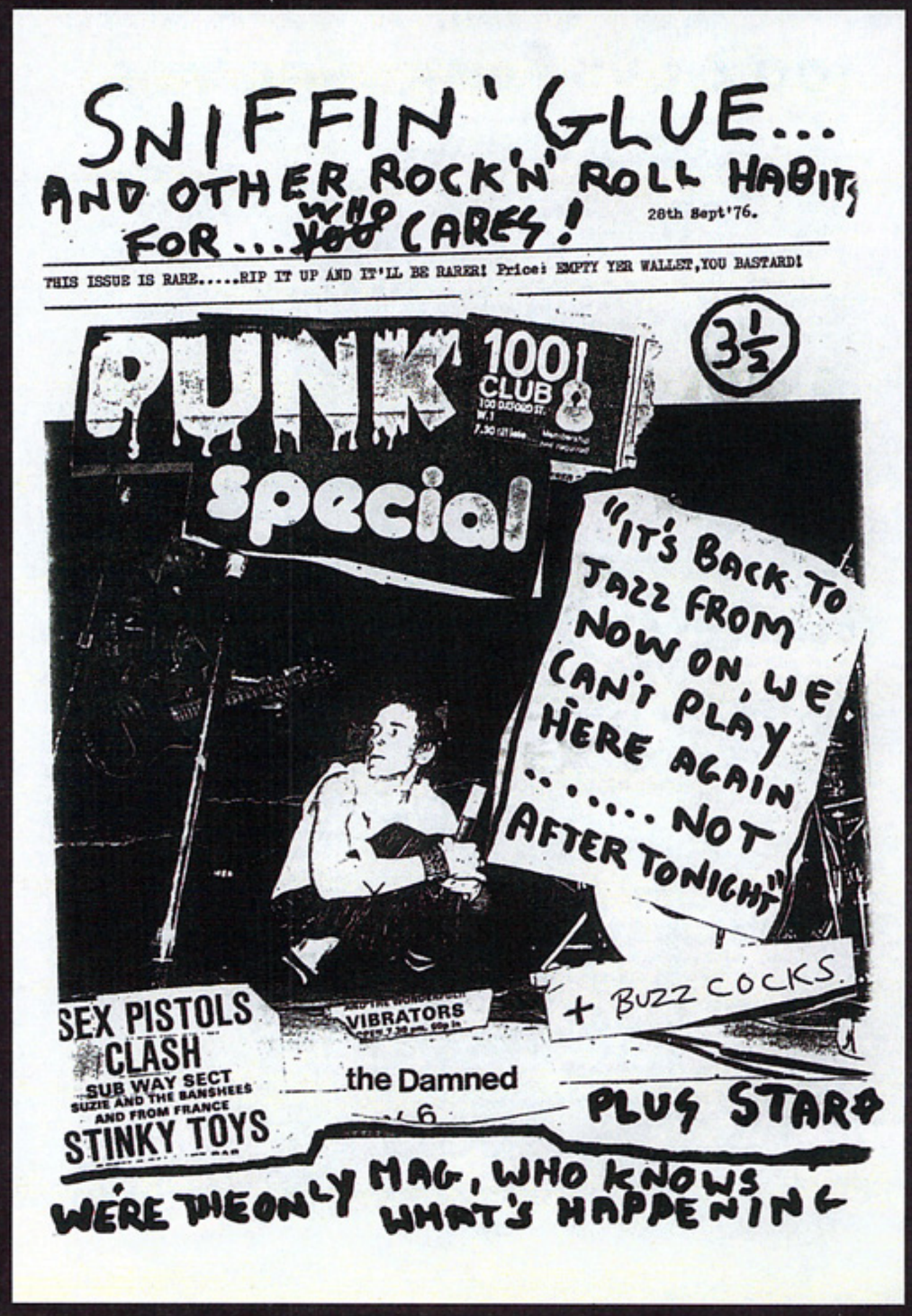
◀ PUNK T-SHIRT ADVERT
"We figured we should have a Punk T-shirt. Unfortunately, it was black writing on a white shirt and everyone wanted white on black, so we rarely sent them out. Debbie Harry was our first T-shirt model in issue three, with Chris Stein taking the photos. He came to us and said, Look, I have a beautiful girl wearing a Punk T-shirt. Cover our band! Blondie were always the most desperate to get in the mag, but they were always helpful and big supporters."







"In its time and place, it was the best rock magazine in the world bar none." Mark Perry



◀ ADVERT FOR ISSUE SIX
October 1976

"This was a complete one-off because we'd had access to a colour photocopier. The article was in a local paper in Glasgow about the problems with glue sniffing on the council estates. We changed bits of it so that they refer to the magazine. It's quite a funny connection because I was invited on Radio 4 a couple of years later for a serious discussion about glue sniffing. They asked me if I didn't think it was disgraceful to encourage kids to sniff glue. They tried to blame it all on me, I think, which was quite odd."

◀ SNIFFIN' GLUE, ISSUE FIVE
December 1976

"I disliked the Sex Pistols and their fans when they were really cliquey and when they slagged off The Damned and The Hot Rods. They tried to dictate what was and wasn't punk, but with Sniffin' Glue we just wanted to write about what was exciting. We would never be dictated to. Because we thought The Hot Rods were punk, we said so. In the previous issue I'd argued the point with Joe Strummer and he complained that they were wearing flares, which I just couldn't see the importance of. Joe said, Like trousers, like brain."

◀ SNIFFIN' SNOW
Christmas Special, 1976

"We were sat around wondering what to do. Then we thought, Oh, let's do a Christmas special for a laugh. It was having a joke really. Magazines nowadays are designed to fuck – style over content. We were taking it back to basics. What you saw was what you got. It was a DIY statement and an economic statement saying, You don't need to spend money to make a magazine."

◀ PIN-UP, ISSUE THREE, IGGY POP AND FRIEND
September 1976

"This was the first SG Pin-up. That's Iggy Pop with journalist Nick Kent. He was my favourite NME writer. He was so rock'n'roll that he used to go on tour with the Stones and he knew Iggy. The NME reviewed that issue and took the piss by saying it was Iggy Pop with some dodgy bird."

▶ SNIFFIN' GLUE, ISSUE THREE AND A HALF
September 1976

"Issue Three came out just before the the 100 Club festival so I wanted to get a post-festival issue out quick. I put it together the day after the festival and it was on the streets a week later. It's a good issue, it really reflects the time. More mainstream journalists told me it was important that they read Sniffin' Glue to find out what was going on. We were, in effect, the voice of punk."

SNIFFIN' GLUE FANZINE

We ♥ UHU

Like the music it covered, Mark Perry's cult punk fanzine knew it was better to burn out than fade away. Paul Stokes charts its rapid rise.

Mark Perry

It took Sniffin' Glue just a couple of months to become *the* British punk publication. The magazine hit the streets of London in the summer of 1976 boasting cover features on the Ramones and Blue Öyster Cult. The guidebook to the scene, its hand-typed, freehand-drawn, photocopied pages embodied punk rock's ethics in print. Sniffin' Glue was the brainchild of Deptford lad Mark Perry, or Mark P, to give him his punk *nom de plume*.

"I was a massive rock fan, and went to loads of gigs during that period," explains Perry. "The first time I remember hearing about punk as such was the Ramones. I'd been reading reviews in NME, so I was quite keen to see them when they came over in July 1976, and that was it really, I was converted."

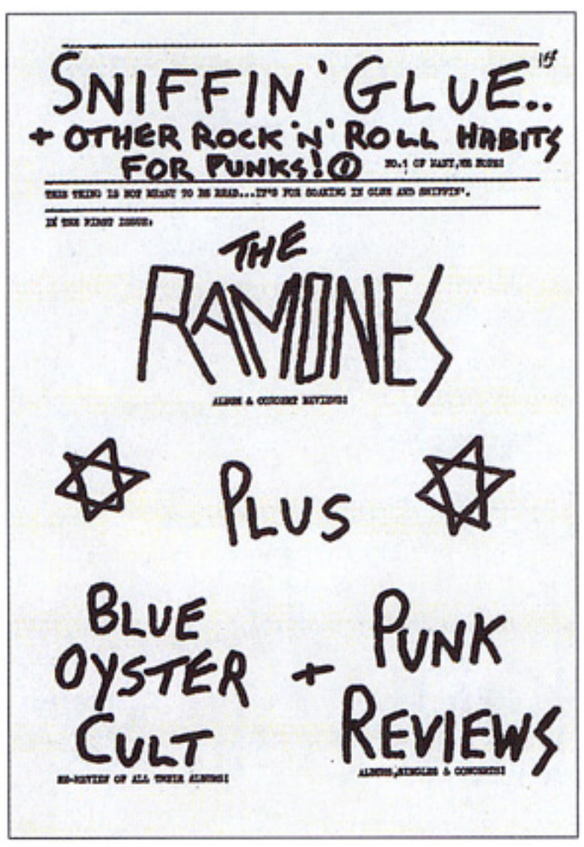
With the scene confined to a small word-of-mouth following initially, Perry recalls an almost religious-like fervour within the scene as people discovered the up-and-coming Sex Pistols.

"Straightaway, it seemed to be about the actual life you were living in 1976 rather than some old-fashioned American rock'n'roll ideal from the '50s," explains Perry. "Getting into the Sex Pistols wasn't like, Oh, I quite like this new band. It really was a lifestyle choice. If you got into the Pistols, you changed your life. That's how dramatic it was."

With only small crowds attending these early gigs, and coverage in the national music papers limited, Perry instinctively felt there was room for a new kind of publication devoted to punk.

"I'd written a letter to a music paper in 1973 about Emerson, Lake And Palmer and that was about the nearest to rock journalism I'd ever come," recalls Perry. "I had no ambitions to be a writer at all, but they often say that you only have to have one good idea and it will make you. I guess Sniffin' Glue was my good idea and I was in the right place at the right time."

Spurred on by Soho music shop Rock On, Perry produced the first issue of Sniffin' Glue – the name was taken from the Ramones song Now I Wanna Sniff Some Glue – in his bedroom and then duly had 20 issues photocopied. The record shop sold out immediately and soon demanded more.


SNIFFIN' GLUE.. + OTHER ROCK 'N' ROLL HABITS FOR PUNKS! ①

THIS THING IS NOT MEANT TO BE READ...IT'S FOR SOAKING IN GLUE AND SNIFFIN'.

IN THE FIRST ISSUE:

THE RAMONES

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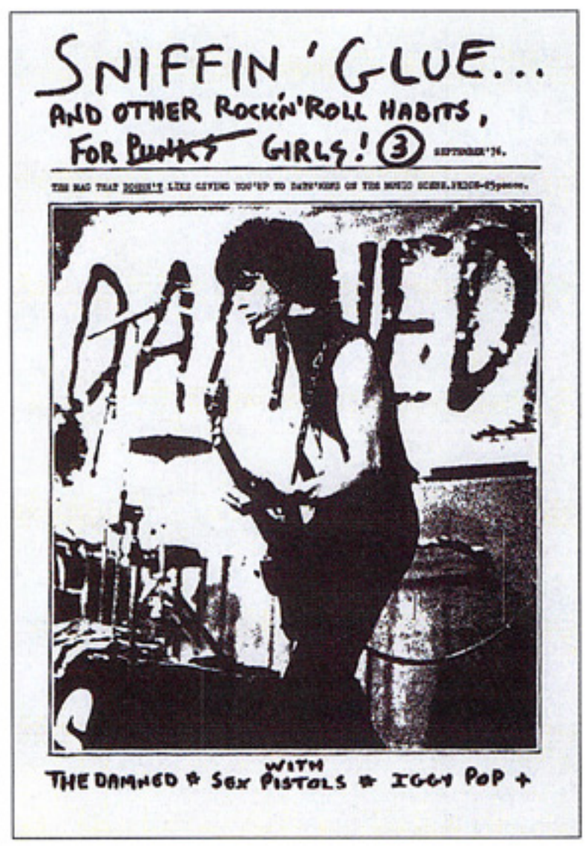
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THE DAMNED ★ SEX PISTOLS WITH ★ IGGY POP +

"I felt I was filling a gap in the market and I was right, it took off really quickly," says Perry of the magazine's rapid success, its basic formatting striking a chord with punk's values.

"I was making the best use of what was available and because that worked there was never any need to change it," says Perry of the fanzine feel. "That became important to the magazine. In a way, we were making a statement – You don't need to be flash. Anyone can have a go. After a couple of months, it was already being called the most important punk fanzine. We were like the bands, playing a gig one minute and getting signed up two minutes later."

Sniffin' Glue initially relocated to a spare room at the Rough Trade record shop and then to Dryden Chambers off Oxford Street. "We had all-night parties there, bands used to rehearse, every wall was graffitied. It was a good place."

Perry found several important contributors, a photographer, and business organiser Harry Murlowski, Steve Mick, who briefly edited the title, and, perhaps most notably, school chum, Danny Baker.

"Danny Baker was definitely the next most important person on Sniffin' Glue," says Perry. "The last few issues are definitely defined by his approach, very powerful and hard-hitting."

However, with punk starting to fade out – Perry cited The Clash signing to major label CBS as its end – and Perry's band Alternative TV starting to take off, Sniffin' Glue was closed down in 1977 at the height of its influence. It ran for 14 issues.

"Was it tough closing Sniffin' Glue? Not for me. It was tough for the people I worked with. I think Danny says it was like his meal ticket going," explains Perry. "I didn't want Sniffin' Glue to lose its edge and, looking back at it now, it was the right thing to do. I think, in its time and place, Sniffin' Glue was the best rock magazine in the world bar none, because it was so connected to what it was writing about. I know that sounds big-headed but I do honestly believe that."

For more information on Sniffin' Glue and Mark Perry, visit www.markperry.freeuk.com

▶ SNIFFIN' GLUE, ISSUE ONE
July 1976

"The whole of that first issue was what I could do at that time with what I had in my bedroom. I had a children's typewriter plus a felt-tip pen, so that's why the first issue is how it is. I just thought it would be a one-off. I knew when I took it to the shop there was a good chance they'd laugh at me, but instead they said, How many have you got? I think my girlfriend had done 20 on the photocopier at her work and they bought the lot off me. Then they advanced me some money to get more printed."

▶ SNIFFIN' GLUE, ISSUE THREE
September 1976

"This was the first issue to feature a picture. I'd met this photographer, Michael Beal, through Eddie And The Hot Rods, and he said he had loads of shots that I could use in the next issue free of charge. For me, the Brian James from The Damned issue is one of the classic Glue covers."

Class of '77

SIOUXSIE & THE BANSHEES

Born on a whim and concluded with similar haste, Siouxsie & The Banshees spent the two decades inbetween inciting outrage. By Daphne Carr.

THE FILE

Personnel: Siouxsie Sioux (vocals), Steven Severin (bass), Marco Perroni (guitar) and Sid Vicious (drums).
Hometown: London
Formed: 1976
The gameplan: Nothing more than to fill a space on the bill of Malcolm McLaren's Punk Festival in 1976.
First gig: 100 Club, London, September 1976.
First record: Hong Kong Garden, August 1978.
Biggest UK hit: Dear Prudence (Number 3), September 1983.

When Bill Grundy asked a quiet, blonde-shaved punk on a date during his Sex Pistols interview, words flew. Thousands of viewers heard the band hurl slanders in defence of the camera-shy Siouxsie Sioux, insults that would ignite the country and cut indelible lines across generations. It was December 1976, and just months after the Banshees' first gig, a crucial time when the first wave of punk bubbled beneath the popular radar.

As part of the Pistols' fan sidecar, known as the 'Bromley Contingent', Siouxsie Sioux's incendiary behaviour and dom-style dress had brought her attention long before the show, just as her swastika armband had earned her punches while on tour with the Pistols in unamused Paris. Coming from the bored privilege of Bromley, Siouxsie did anything and everything to incite anxiety in the straight world – from appearing bare-breasted at shows to getting in fights with men who thought those breasts were out for them.

"I scared record executives and kept them from signing us." Siouxsie Sioux

When Malcolm McLaren needed another band to play his Punk Festival at the 100 Club in September 1976, Siouxsie offered hers. Immediately thereafter she set out to make that band with Contingent-members Steve Severin, Billy Idol (who bailed before the show), and friends Sid Vicious (on drums) and Marco Perroni (on guitar).

At their first practice, in The Clash's space, they realised they couldn't get a single song together so they gave up trying. Just before the 100 Club show Bernard Rhodes slagged Siouxsie for her armband, and the resulting argument led to The Clash rescinding their gear loan. Instead, the Banshees' din came through the Pistols' speakers that night, and it betrayed a brilliant lack of foresight, an affinity for Velvets-styled distortion, and a penchant for the destruction of pop form. In Siouxsie's 20-minute rant, The Lord's Prayer, layered shrieks of father-angst and Clockwork Orange-inspired urban dismay mixed with Bay City Rollers and McCartney lyrics. Some say it was miraculous, others say it was terrible. Either way, it carved them a distinct and immediate place in the new wave.

"Forming the band was rather spontaneous. We didn't plan to do anything, especially to have a career," Siouxsie said, but the band soon grew beyond the tightening rules of the scene. Theirs was a different approach to the surrounding dismay – introspection, anxiety and a burgeoning English fascination with the gothic – and these would fire their work from their first single onward. For inspiration Siouxsie had Nico to the boys' Velvets, Patti Smith to others' Iggy – and respected bands like New York's Suicide "who've tended to be forgotten because they didn't fit neatly into the little slot of punk, which I think the Banshees didn't do either," Siouxsie said.

Her provocative stance and toughness also earned them a struggle for commercial success during the punk major label fox-hunt. "I think I scared the record executives and kept them from signing us – because although everyone around me was comfortable with the way I dressed and acted, it was shocking and confrontational to the other 90 per cent of people."

Severin has claimed Siouxsie's fascist fashion and their initial label distrust accounted for the long wait between the 100 Club and their first single. By 1978, when they finally signed to Polydor, most of punk's first wave was running thin or shedding their unique features to move towards the middle ground.

Hong Kong Garden hit the streets only a month after the Banshees were signed and went straight into the Top 10. Drummer Kenny Morris, Sid's replacement, played a cymbal-less kit, birthing the tribal aesthetic which would shape the band through the '80s. With critical and popular success, they recorded their debut LP The Scream, which brought the band's exotic melodies and dark imagery to full force, sounding more akin to art-doomers Joy Division than London's stagnating punk scene.

Their first single also featured the second of six eventual Banshees' guitarists. These defections were a central factor in why the band outlasted most early punk bands. "We had to relearn everything each time we got a new guitarist," recalls Siouxsie, "and somehow it kept us from getting jaded."

As Siouxsie And The Banshees moved through guitarists, so too they morphed between goth, new wave, and ethereal forms while critical approval dwindled and commercial success skyrocketed. By the time they had their first hit in America, Kiss Them For Me, the English press had already sealed their coffin. After the John Cale-produced album The Rapture, Siouxsie became enraged by the reunion of the surviving Sex Pistols and, reading the signs, ended the Banshees with this statement, "As the 'music industry' prepares to relive the heady days of 'punk', when confusing the opportunists with the protagonists, it proceeded to sign anything with a safety-pin that could spit, Siouxsie And The Banshees would like to say Thank You and Goodbye."

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Siouxsie Sioux
Sioux (far left) married Banshees drummer Budgie in 1991, and the couple continue to record as The Creatures. They toured extensively to support the '99 album Anima Animus and the subsequent remix album Hybrids. Siouxsie has also recently been pushing the re-mastering of the early LPs and a collection of B-sides she referred to as "most of my favourite songs". After years of frustration between Severin and Sioux, a recent reconciliation has led to a reformation for the American Valley Coachella Festival and a handful of US dates. Although she doesn't forecast a full return, she admits to "being really excited" about the reunion and that she "can't wait to see Severin take the stage after so long".

Steve Severin
Shortly after the break-up, Severin (second left) and his girlfriend had a daughter and took time off from music to relax and write for The Guardian. He now has his own label, RE, and has recorded three albums of ambient works. He hasn't taken the stage in over seven years.

Sid Vicious
Sadly, Sid (far right) moved on to a better place.

Marco Perroni
Perroni (second right) left the band just after the 100 Club show to join Adam And The Ants, staying on as co-songwriter and guitarist while recording with artists such as the Wolfgang Press side-project Rema-Rema, Spear Of Destiny and Sinéad O'Connor.

PHOTOS: REX, RAY STEVENSON

Thanks for the mammaries:
Siouxsie exposes herself, 1976.

EYEWITNESS

4 April 1977
30 June 1977

While the music grew in popularity and more bands joined the party, punks themselves were being targetted as hate figures by the media. And what began as a movement of protest soon descended into violence.

The spring of '77 was probably the peak for punk in the UK, with new bands forming and signing record deals faster than at any time since the Liverpool beat boom of the '60s. But, as more and more mainstream bands attached themselves to the core, the music became less coherent. Similarly, the leftist political aspirations of the early punks became obscured by punk fashion's flirtations with Nazism, by The Jam's announcement that they would vote Tory at the next election and by the sinister emergence of skinhead punk outfits like Skrewdriver. It was the beginning of the end.

4 April 1977

XTC, described as "encouraged by the emergence of punk rock" play at The Affair, Swindon, Wiltshire. They are seen by Jonathan King, who is considering signing them to his label.

Andy Partridge (XTC): I remember seeing the Sex Pistols performing Anarchy In The UK on TV in a record store and only being mildly impressed. I liked their attitude, but it wasn't so radically different from what the New York Dolls and The Stooges had been doing years earlier. I couldn't really see what all the fuss was about.

5 April 1977

Having broken her neck in Florida some weeks earlier, Patti Smith returns to live performing with a show at CBGB's, New York.

7 April 1977

The Clash release their eponymous debut album.

Elvis Costello: I remember being outraged and thinking, If this is what music's going to be like, that's it. I'll quit before I've done anything. I remember Joe Strummer describing their sound as a sea lion barking over a load of pneumatic drills, which is what their first album sounds like when you first hear it. I remember hearing it and saying, If that's what it's going be like, that's it. I'll quit before I've done anything. Then I thought, Well, I want to see what this is about. I'll listen to it until I decide it's rubbish. I listened to it on my headphones for 36 hours straight – and then I sat down and wrote Watching The Detectives.

The Clash, The Jam, Buzzcocks, The Slits and Subway Sect perform at The Playhouse, Edinburgh, Scotland.

Johnny Black (audience): This was the north's first real exposure to punk rock bands en masse, and the bands faced a sceptical, often hostile, audience – one wag heckled The Slits by shouting out, Keep 'em on! One difference between The Clash and The Jam was underlined when Paul Simonon broke a bass string. Neither him nor The Clash roadies seemed capable of re-stringing the instrument. Joe Strummer kept the crowd amused by tuning a ghetto blaster to a local radio station and piping it through his mic. The situation wasn't resolved until Bruce Foxton of The Jam ran on and handed Simonon a properly tuned bass.

THE CAST LIST

Elvis Costello
Raised in Liverpool, Costello (below) performed with country outfit Flip City before developing an angry young man persona and securing a deal with Stiff Records in 1977. His debut LP, My Aim Is True, chimed with the punk ethos, but Costello was looking beyond the musical criteria of punk.

Andy Partridge
One of the UK's most original songwriters, Partridge's XTC signed to Virgin in 1977. Their preoccupation with rural folk, summer fêtes and psychedelia swam against the tide of the punk scene with which they were initially associated. After releasing the albums, GO 2, Black Sea and Drums And Wires, Partridge suffered a number of breakdowns before declaring XTC would continue as a studio band.

Adam Ant
Stuart Goddard's first Ants emerged in early '77 with sado-masochistic imagery courtesy of their manager Jordan, a former McLaren acolyte. After releasing their poorly-received Dirk Wears White Sox in 1979, the Ants left to form Bow Wow Wow. Adam assembled new Ants, reinvented himself as Pirate, Red Indian, etc and had three Number One hits in the '80s.

Poly Styrene
After seeing a Pistols gig in Hastings, Marion Elliot assembled X-Ray Spex from replies to her Melody Maker ad for 'Young Punx who want to stick it together.' After a hit with Oh Bondage, Up Yours! X-Ray Spex split in 1979.

PHOTOS: IAN DICKSON

The Slits' Ari Up – or is it Steven Tyler? – supporting The Clash, April '77.

EYEWITNESS

The Damned: making history at New York's CBGB's, April '77.

8 April 1977

When The Damned play the first of four nights at CBGB's, New York, they become the first British punk band to perform in the US. They are supported by The Dead Boys.

Roberta Bayley (CBGB's regular): The Damned came over and did a weekend with The Dead Boys – it was a sort of battle of the bands scenario. The Dead Boys were doing a version of Anarchy In The UK. They were goofing on the English bands and stuff. The Dead Boys were just rock, they weren't really punk when they came out of Cleveland. But they quickly adapted to what the scene needed – which was their own punk-rock band doing Iggy and The Stooges stuff onstage – and would throw themselves around and be outrageous and cut themselves. But to me, The Damned were really original.

9 April 1977

The Clash's debut single, White Riot, peaks at Number 38. The Boys release their first single, I Don't Care.

10 April 1977

John Cale, supported by Generation X, plays at The Roundhouse, London.

16 April 1977

The Damned's debut album, Damned, Damned, Damned, peaks at Number 34.

Captain Sensible (bassist, The Damned): It's very much a thing of 1977. I'm proud to have been a part of it, but I don't like the stuff. I didn't like it at the time.

17 April 1977

The Stranglers, Cherry Vanilla, The Jam and The Police play at The Roundhouse, London.

18 April 1977

The Stranglers release their first album, Rattus Norvegicus.

21 April 1977

The Damned play at Mabuhay Gardens, San Francisco.

Jeff Raphael (audience): The Damned were the first English (punk) band to tour the US. I thought they were amazing. They were so fast, they were 100 times faster than the Ramones and, of course, that was the thing at that time, speed.

Jimmy Wisley (audience): The Damned's show at the Mab had everybody from around here who was in a band. They played everything, and everybody was sort of looking at each other with their mouths open, and after that I think the bands started changing a little more. Songs got faster, set lists got tighter.

TIME CAPSULE

As the nation begins to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's succession to the throne, Sale of The Century becomes a hit on the silvery tube. Other momentous events include...

2 April

Abba's Knowing Me Knowing You is at Number One.

23 April

Seven million gallons of crude oil escapes after a blowout at a North Sea drilling platform.

7 June

An estimated 6,000 street parties take place in London for the Royal Jubilee.

22 April 1977

Devon-based punks The Adverts release their debut single, One Chord Wonders.

Gaye Advert: When I was little, I wanted to be a spacewoman, then I wanted to be a showjumper and had my own pony. I became a punk singer and now feel as if I have no ambition left.

23 April 1977

When Siouxsie And The Banshees play at The Roxy, London, they inspire new band The B-Sides to change direction. They will re-emerge as Adam And The Ants.

Adam Ant: Most punks were sexless, grey. Blank generation – nonsense. Dole queue martyrdom – nonsense. I just wanted to react against it.

24 April 1977

The Ramones begin a European tour, supported by Talking Heads.

29 April 1977

The Jam release their debut single, In The City.

Paul Weller: Loads of punk songs were about boredom and it was like, well, you should come and live in the suburbs where there's literally nothing going on except drinking and fighting. London seemed so exciting, and it was that feeling we were trying to capture – not just on the single, but on the album too.

30 April 1977
The Clash's eponymous debut album peaks at Number 12.

5 May 1977
Adam And The Ants play their first gig under that name, in a Muswell Hill front room.

When The Clash play at Eric's, Liverpool, they are seen by local music fans Ian McCulloch, Julian Cope, Bill Drummond and Pete Wylie, all of whom will start bands within days of the show, resulting in the emergence of The KLF, The Teardrop Explodes, Echo And The Bunnymen and Wah! Heat.

6 May 1977
Recently signed to Phonogram Records, Ireland's Boomtown Rats play their first UK mainland gig, at Studio 51, London.

7 May 1977
During The Clash's White Riot tour, 200 seats are trashed during a riot at The Rainbow, London.

Billy Bragg: This was the first big theatre gig punk did. Even bigger than the Pistols tour. No punk gig had been in a huge auditorium before. I actually went along to see The Jam who were supporting, me and my mates liked them because they were influenced by early Who and The Rolling Stones who we were listening to at the time. I didn't really connect with what you'd call mainstream punk. I think we'd heard The Damned album but thought it was a bit too fast. The Clash was a revelation. I went in there a rock'n'roll fan and came out a dyed-in-the-wool Clash fan. That moment for me changed my whole perception of how you make music, why you make music, and how to deal with the world.

The audience at The Rainbow were the scariest I'd ever been in. They were punks and I'd never seen punks up close before – never been in an audience that was like being in a riot. They trashed the seats down at the front, threw them at the stage. Up in the balcony there were people just going mad!

Caroline Coon (journalist): I remember helping to clear the stage up after the riot. I picked up a huge piece of metal from a broken chair, this huge spike, weighed about two pounds, and it had been thrown at the stage. If it had hit anybody in the band it could have easily killed them. I kept it for years after.

In Canterbury, Jean-Jacques Burnel of The Stranglers leaps from the stage to attack an audience member.

Trash from chaos: The Rainbow (top) after The Clash, May '77. (Above) X-Ray Spec's Poly Styrene and Lora Logic at The Man In The Moon, May '77.

11 May 1977
X-Ray Spex peform at The Man In The Moon pub, Chelsea, London, supported by Adam And The Ants.

Poly Styrene: Punk was a very influential time, especially for fashion. I didn't play on the lip gloss side of femininity, my look was quite strong and heavy, with helmets and goggles, PVC stuff, etc. If anything, men were frightened when I walked onstage. Punk for me wasn't really a political thing. It was more to do with personal development.

13 May 1977
The Clash release a new single, Remote Control.

After being auditioned by Hansa Records at Morgan Studios, London, The Easy Cure (later to become The Cure) are offered a recording contract.

14 May 1977
The Sex Pistols sign to Virgin Records for just £15,000.

Johnny Rotten: That felt like we'd arrived, because there was a sense of respect with Virgin. I've always liked Richard Branson because, pompous rich twat that he is, he has a great sense of rebelliousness. It really didn't matter what was on the cheque. We knew we wouldn't see much of it.

Talking Heads play a headlining gig at the Rock Garden, London.

21 May 1977
The Stranglers release their second single, Peaches. It will peak at Number 8.

22 May 1977
Television and Blondie start their British tour at The Apollo, Glasgow.

Gary Valentine (bass player, Blondie): The British tour was fantastic. I would pogo around and either I would have my dark glasses on so I couldn't see anything, or I wouldn't have any glasses on at all, which was just as bad, because I'm short-sighted.

23 May 1977
999 play at The Hope & Anchor, London.

27 May 1977
Elvis Costello plays his first gig under that name at The Nashville, West London.

Allan Jones (journalist): There was a cursory introduction, then he ran out, plugged in and launched into his set without a word. In the context of The Clash and the Sex Pistols, it was remarkable to see one bloke achieve the same

PHOTOS: STAR FILE, IAN DICKSON, HULTON ARCHIVE

EYEWITNESS

Heavenly body: The Saints' Chris Bailey, '77 UK tour.

"I was infamous and broke. I was having to avoid paying my bus fare while I was on The Mirror's front page."

Johnny Rotten

sort of impact. He rattled on, barely waited for applause, did virtually the whole of the first album, then he was gone. We were stunned.

The Sex Pistols release God Save The Queen.

Elvis Costello: We were all living in this block of flats, and nobody had a lot of money... And there were all these people in 1977, when the Jubilee was on, wasting their money on a bloody street party for the Queen. Perhaps it sounds small-minded now, but I used to really enjoy playing God Save The Queen loud, because all the little old ladies would be so outraged.

Johnny Rotten: Parliament in those days could actually do something to damage you. The institutions were all hand-in-glove together. Everything was safe and structured and organised and we were a spanner in the works. By then, the press overexaggeration had made us infamous. But infamous and broke doesn't quite work. I still had to bunk fares on the subway, I still had to avoid the bus conductor, all that while you're on page one of the Daily Mirror. Believe me that's hard.

28 May 1977

As part of a Gong reunion show at the Circus Hippodrome, Paris, France, Police members Sting and Stewart Copeland play with Andy Summers for the first time in Mike Howlett's band, Strontium 90.

Skrewdriver, Britain's first actively pro-Nazi punk band, plays at The Red Cow, London.

Ian Donaldson (singer, Skrewdriver): A pamphlet is read only once, but a song is learnt by heart and repeated a thousand times.

29 May 1977

The Jam pull out of the White Riot tour with The Clash when a dispute arises about lighting costs.

Bernie Rhodes (manager, The Clash): Chris Parry has claimed that we demanded a four-figure sum from The Jam, but we haven't got a penny out of them, and we've lost £17,000 on this tour, subsidising the smaller groups.

29 May 1977

Warsaw, an early incarnation of Joy Division, debuts at the Electric Circus, Manchester, supporting the Buzzcocks.

Richard Boon (manager, Buzzcocks): Warsaw were booked because it was very important to have another Manchester band. There was a governing policy behind Buzzcocks' dates that they would try to galvanize something – hype a scene before there was one.

31 May 1977

The Patti Smith Group begins a nine-day residency at CBGB's, New York.

The Television/Blondie tour ends at Colston Hall, Bristol.

Gary Valentine: There were fist-fights onstage. In England it was Jimmy Destri and Chris Stein. One night, in Bristol, suddenly the stage wasn't there any more and I landed on my back. The bouncers picked me up, threw me onto the stage and we went into an encore.

2 June 1977

The Only Ones play at the Rochester Castle pub, London.

Johnny Black (audience): The Rochester Castle was a local gig for me then, and I went with my house-mate Willo (later to become William Orbit). The Only Ones then were very Velvet Underground influenced but had a London punk aggro feel, curiously featuring a guitar player given to very complex playing. I noted in my diary they'd do better if the guitarist switched to playing more in a 'powerful rhythmic style'.

Drummer Dave Barbe joins Adam And The Ants.

3 June 1977

While Johnny Thunders and The Heartbreakers are playing a show in Leeds, a gunman enters their hotel room, claiming to be a secret-service agent, and holds the band hostage for four hours, before leaving as mysteriously as he had come.

4 June 1977

The Jam's debut single, In The City, peaks at Number 40.

6 June 1977

The Ramones play at the Roundhouse, London, supported by Talking Heads.

7 June 1977

The Sex Pistols take their celebrated Jubilee boat ride down the Thames.

9 June 1977

Sham 69 play at The Roxy, London.

Dave Parsons (guitarist, Sham 69): To me, punk was a rejection of the way the music industry was being run. If you weren't The Eagles or Elton John or someone established, you could forget it. Punk was about the ordinary kid in the street realising a new confidence and saying, Shit! I can do this.

10 June 1977

Joe Strummer and Topper Headon of The Clash are fined £5 each for spray-painting the band's name on a London wall.

Compilation album Live At The Roxy is released, showcasing the talents of Wire, Slaughter And The Dogs, The Unwanted, The Adverts, Eater and more.

11 June 1977

Joe Strummer and Topper Headon of The Clash appear in court in Newcastle to answer charges of stealing a pillowcase from the Holiday Inn. They are fined £100.

Australian punk band The Saints begin a UK tour at the Priory Hotel, Scunthorpe.

Chris Bailey (The Saints): I have never been over fond of scenes anywhere, it wasn't that I wasn't enamoured by the notion of punky rock à la Anglaise... it was just that most aspects of the movement that I encountered were just a tad too careerist for my simple country tastes. I know we were signed to EMI and all... but... I still had a few teenage delusions left by the time we got to Blighty. They didn't last long.

14 June 1977

The Greater London Council forces The Jam to abandon an outdoor gig at Chelsea Football ground. Police have to quell angry crowds.

17 June 1977

God Save The Queen by the Sex Pistols peaks at Number 2 in the singles chart. There is much debate about whether the chart has been 'fixed' to prevent the Pistols reaching Number 1.

18 June 1977

The Sex Pistols are recording in Wessex Studios, London, with Chris Thomas and Bill Price.

Bill Price (engineer/producer): Chris was hired by Malcolm (McLaren) to do a series of singles for the Sex Pistols. I was hired by Malcolm to do a series of album tracks. I couldn't quite understand why Malcolm kept chopping and changing between different versions of songs. Then it slowly dawned on Chris and myself that Malcolm was trying to slip between two stools and not pay either of us. So we said, I'll tell you what, Malcolm. Whatever's on the Sex Pistols' album, it was either done by me or Chris, and you can pay us and we'll divvy it out among our little selves. Which is what we did.

"He became a ballet dancer, y'know." Jimmy Pursey and Sham 69, The Roxy, June '77.

The sleeve was printed before it was decided which version of each individual song was on the record. If we'd known, it would have said "produced by Bill Price" or "produced by Chris Thomas". That's how we ended up with that credit, "produced by Bill Price or Chris Thomas".

Johnny Rotten is attacked and injured by a razor-wielding gang when he leaves The Pegasus pub in North London.

Bill Price: We were probably marked down for attack when Johnny Rotten was recognised in the pub. As we left, the gang – about nine men, all in their 30s – pounced, waving razors and knives and aiming for Johnny. They cut his face and arm but didn't do any serious damage.

Chris Franz and Tina Weymouth of Talking Heads are married in Washington, Kentucky.

19 June 1977

The Sex Pistols' Paul Cook is attacked outside Shepherd's Bush tube station, London, by six thugs who strike him with a crowbar.

Paul Cook: I was attacked by some old Teds. Apparently they didn't like the fact I was wearing brothel creepers!

Tom Petty and The Heartbreakers play at The Rainbow, London, supported by The Boomtown Rats.

20 June 1977

The Stranglers play the Top Of The World, Stafford, supported by London.

Miles (London): The Stranglers had a big hit with Peaches, yet I remember being amazed that they hardly ever played it during that tour.

As support we went on first, so for many people we were the first punk band they'd ever seen. Reaction was good until the Pistols released God Save The Queen and the tabloids went punk crazy. But all they ever stressed was the violence thing. Then the audiences changed. There was quite a bit of violence at gigs and a lot of gobbing. We would walk off the stage covered in spit and we'd have to hose the drum kit down afterwards!

20 June 1977

The Slits play in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, supported by Adam And The Ants.

21 June 1977

Gaye Advert and TV Smith of The Adverts are beaten up by Teds in Hammersmith, London. On arrival at the hospital, they are told, What do you expect if you go around dressed like that?

23 June 1977

Johnny Rotten is attacked at Dingwalls, Camden, London.

24 June 1977

Australian punk band The Saints play the first of two nights at The Rock Garden, London.

25 June 1977

Radiators From Space and The Undertones play Dublin University.

30 June 1977

Dave Vanian of The Damned is attacked in the dressing room at a gig in the West Country, sustaining a dislocated shoulder.

DAILY Mirror

BRITAIN'S BIGGEST DAILY SALE 7p

SLASHED!

Razor attack on Rotten, the Punk Rocker

JOHNNY ROTTEN, king of punk rock, has had his face slashed in a frenzied razor attack by a gang who ambushed him outside a pub.

Marked

JOHNNY ROTTEN . . . a bootboy victim — with more to come?

PHOTOS: ERICA ECHENBERG/REDFERNS, IAN DICKSON

GENERATION X

Middle-class, pretty and apolitical – Generation X were all wrong for your pogoing connoisseur. But that didn't stop them having hits. By Lois Wilson.

THE FILE

Personnel: Billy Idol (vocals), Bob Andrews (guitar), Tony James (bass), John Towe (drums).
Hometown: London
Formed: 1976
The gameplan: To be bigger than The Beatles. "We wanted to be rock'n'roll stars. We wanted to be the English New York Dolls." Tony James, 2002.
First gig: 10 December, 1976, London's Central College Of Art And Design.
First record: Your Generation, September 1977.
Biggest UK hit: King Rocker (Number 11), January 1979.

"James, you're too fucking soft! Tell your parents you're going to spend Christmas with a hooker." These were Bernie Rhodes's last words to London SS member Tony James before his glam punk collective went their separate ways – Brian James, Captain Sensible and Rat Scabies to form The Damned, Mick Jones and Paul Simonon to kickstart The Clash, and Chrissie Hynde to eventually found The Pretenders.

Lucky for us, Brunel maths graduate and bassist, Tony James didn't take his advice – well the bit about toughening up that is – because just a few months later he teamed up with Billy Idol and John Towe and the first punk pin-ups were born.

Generation X were the very antithesis of punk. They weren't aggressive or tough. They didn't talk politics and they didn't scream about year zero. Instead, they blow-dried their hair and eulogised the '60s, namedropping The Beatles, Cathy McGowan, the Stones and "Bobby Dylan" in their third single Ready Steady Go. Even their moniker and its typeface were taken from a 1964 book, detailing the lives of teenage mods, which they had found on Billy Idol's mum's bookcase.

"We weren't taken seriously by the working-class journalist mafia at all and that really hurt us." Tony James

Here was a group of pretty boys – "We'd never have a fat person in the band," Tony James, Generation X's founding member famously said at the time – who wanted to create great pop music, appear on Top Of The Pops and, ultimately, make it big.

The NME scorned them – Tony Parsons despised both their middle-class roots and university education. "We weren't taken seriously by the working-class journalist mafia at all," Tony James recalls, "and that really hurt us." But the kids loved them and they were the first punk band to play The Roxy and sell out The Roxy too. "It wasn't so much a case of what attracted me to the punk movement," muses Tony, "more, what attracted the punk movement to me. When I first met Mick Jones at a Heavy Metal Kids gig we decided to form London SS. We advertised to find like-minded people into the New York Dolls and The Stooges. Surprisingly, few people applied; someone called Morrissey called up but we were put off by the fact he lived in Manchester. It seemed such a terribly long way away, back then."

When London SS disbanded without a gig or record to their name, Tony hooked up with one William Broad, soon to be re-christened Billy Idol. The pair saw an ad for Gene October's Chelsea, auditioned and landed the job as bassist and guitarist respectively. "But it was obvious to all except Gene that Billy should be the singer." So when Gene was reluctant to take the stage at an encore at the Nashville, Billy and Tony seized their opportunity, playing a song they had written called Prove It.

Leaving Gene behind ("naturally he was upset") and taking drummer John Towe with them, they searched for a guitarist. "Billy came across Bob Andrews playing in a band called Paradox at a local youth club. He was only 17 and beautiful-looking. He had long hair but we cut it short for him even though he hated it."

Their live debut at London's Central College Of Art And Design on 10 December, 1976 was a huge success. "Despite us only having seven songs, two of which we played twice. We were a cross between Lou Reed, The Who Live At Leeds and The Small Faces," recalls James.

Their residency at The Roxy was a similar success too and, come July 1977, they signed on the dotted line with Chrysalis. Having ditched Towe, replacing him with Subway Sect renegade sticksman Mark Laff, they recorded their debut single. The Nicky Chinn and Mike Chapman-produced Your Generation would be a Top 40 hit.

"That was a big deal in those days," says James. "We went on Top Of The Pops and it was a dream to be on there because only proper groups went on that programme. We never had this problem about going on television because we so wanted to be stars."

Sadly, this was something the band weren't going to achieve for some time. Their sophomore single, Wild Youth, despite being a three-minute blast of perfect pop, failed to scrape the charts. Meanwhile, their 1978 eponymous debut only reached Number 28. "But history has proved us right," says Tony proudly. "Billy went on to be a true pop idol and I had success with Sigue Sigue Sputnik. In those days there was only one game in town. Either you were happening or not happening, and Generation X were *definitely* happening."

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Billy Idol
After Gen X spilt in 1981, Billy Idol (far left) relocated to New York, achieving the pop stardom he had always coveted, notching up a series of UK and US hits with White Wedding, Rebel Yell, a cover of Tommy James And The Shondell's Mony Mony, Eyes Without A Face and Hot In The City. In 1996 he joined The Who onstage at Earl's Court, playing the part of the Ace Face in their rendition of Quadrophenia.

Tony James
In 1986 James (second left) formed cyber-punk outfit Sigue Sigue Sputnik alongside Martin Degville, Neal X, Ray Mayhew and Chris Cavanagh. Taking their name from a Russian street gang, they had hits with Love Missile F1-11 and 21st Century Boy before disbanding. James briefly played bass for Sisters Of Mercy before reforming Sigue Sigue Sputnik, who are still going strong.

Bob Andrews
Leaving the group in June '79 after the band's second LP, Valley Of The Dolls, Andrews (second from right) went on to form Westworld in 1986 with Elizabeth Westwood and Nick Burton. The trio notched up five hits, including the Number 11 hit Sonic Boom Boy. In 1994, Andrews and Westwood regrouped as Moondogg and released two albums, Fat Lot Of Good and God's Wallop.

John Towe
Having left Gen X before the band recorded a note, Towe (far right) went on to keep time for The Adverts and Alternative TV before forming The Rage.

PHOTOS: GERED MANKOVITZ/LFI

X appeal: punk's first pin-up, Billy Idol, beefs up his biceps.

When the Sex Pistols took to the Thames in an attempt to upstage the Jubilee celebrations, it was simultaneously their greatest moment and the beginning of the end of punk. By Johnny Black.

GOD SAVE

THE QUEEN,
and we mean it ma'am

For anyone with even half a brain, the notion of British superiority, the dream of empire and the nobility of the nobility, were all concepts that had long passed their sell-by date as our proud island race geared itself up to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II. To mark her 25th glorious year on the throne, the week beginning 7 June would be marked by a chain of bonfires stretching the length of the country, after which her grateful subjects would revel in the delights of street parties, TV specials, Jubilee mugs (and bras), hundreds of miles of festive bunting and two additional public holidays.

All of this would take place in a land blighted by unemployment, spiralling inflation, pay strikes, IRA mainland bombing and violent clashes between extreme right and left wing protesters. As if determined to further alienate huge sections of an already depressed nation, in her Jubilee speech, on 4 May, Her Majesty included thinly veiled criticisms of the growing movements for Scottish and Welsh nationalism. How much further out of touch with the realities of British society could the monarch be?

Ten days after the Jubilee speech, the Sex Pistols cemented their third unholy alliance with a major record label when they signed to 'hip capitalist' Richard Branson's Virgin Records. The advance, just £15,000 for UK rights, seemed a pittance compared with their previous raids on the coffers of EMI and A&M, but that doesn't seem to have troubled Johnny Rotten because, "there was a sense of respect with Virgin. I've always liked Richard Branson because, pompous rich twat that he is, he has a great sense of rebelliousness. As a band, we were used to not having money. It really didn't matter what was on the cheque. We knew we wouldn't see much of it."

Malcolm McLaren, however, has admitted to a different perspective. "I didn't trust Richard. I looked into his eyes and didn't even want to leave without my demo cassette. I was thinking, This is a guy who could bootleg me tomorrow morning and have it on a stall in the Portobello Road."

For his part, Branson is said to have harboured a certain affection for McLaren's roguish charm, but it was an affection far outweighed by good business sense, because the Virgin king had already been stitched up once by the punk Svengali. On the day that EMI had dropped the Pistols, Branson immediately invited them to sign with Virgin. Grasping for a lifeline, McLaren had shaken hands on a deal, but then signed with A&M the next day. So, as much as Branson wanted the band, he knew from bitter experience that he could never let his guard down. As he put it himself, "Fair compromise was not really in Malcolm's language".

What was in Malcolm's language, however, was outrage. The first single to be released under the Virgin deal would be God Save The Queen. The opening lines, as snarled by Rotten, "God Save The Queen, the fascist regime, that made you a moron..." were so heavily drenched in irony that everything was left open to interpretation. It was hard to be 100 per cent certain whether he was attacking the Queen or sympathising with her. He might have been implying that she needed saving from her 'fascist regime', he might have been damning both, or perhaps his real target was the great British public who had allowed the regime to turn them into morons.

"The single is nothing personal against the Queen," Rotten said at the time. "It's what she stands for... a symbol. She's probably just like everybody else but, watching her on telly, as far as I'm concerned, she ain't no human being. She's a piece of cardboard that they drag around on a trolley."

Whatever it meant, McLaren was counting on the fact that with the Jubilee in full swing, the worst possible interpretation would almost certainly be the one picked up and trumpeted in banner headlines by the right-wing media. He was right. Somehow, the papers managed to interpret the lyric as calling the queen a moron. There's little doubt that the many column inches devoted to this treachery helped ensure that when God Save The Queen was released on 27 May, despite airplay bans on BBC and commercial radio, it sold 100,000 copies within a week.

"WHEN THE COPS LOOKED UP MY ARSE FOR DRUGS I FARTED ON THEM!"
SID VICIOUS

When it entered the chart on 4 June at Number 11, McLaren already had another royal bombshell planned to keep the flames fanned – a boat ride down the Thames, a punk parody of Her Majesty's own planned progression up the river. Rotten later dismissed the trip as having come about, "just as a giggle because of not getting gigs. I had in my mind not the slightest knowledge of there being a Jubilee at all. 'Fucking hell, what a coincidence'."

It's an impossible statement to believe, and McLaren must have been fully cognisant of the connection because he presented the idea to Virgin's Head of Press, Al Clark, in that context. "To put out a record as contentious as God Save The Queen in Jubilee Week," said Clark later, "knowing that your group already elicits a disproportionate amount of loathing from a considerable part of the British public, and then do a boat trip up the Thames with the boat hung with obnoxious banners, knowing it's going to be noisy, emphatic and anti-Jubilee, is the difference between having the propensity for saying 'Fuck you' and saying 'Fuck you' very noisily and in public."

The quicksilver-tongued McLaren had sold the idea to Virgin with such conviction and joie-de-vivre that Clark felt it sounded like "something you would really enjoy organising, that would make you feel terrific." Used to having to fight every idea through record company bureaucracy, McLaren must have been delighted to find that Virgin was more than happy to, literally, get in the same boat with him.

As part of the total cost of £1,500, split between the company and McLaren, Virgin marketing executive John Varnom spent £500 to hire the 175-capacity pleasure cruiser Queen Elizabeth to set sail at 6.30pm from Charing Cross pier on 7 June – the same day that an estimated one million loyal subjects turned out to line the streets and watch the Queen's procession from Buck House to St Paul's.

Jon Savage was one of the journalists invited along by Clark. "The boat was a good size, it had two big lounges, so it wasn't packed," he remembers. "Almost as soon as I got on board, though, I sensed a very paranoid atmosphere, as if we'd all taken loads of speed – which I definitely hadn't."

Punk scenester Jordan provides some of the explanation for this atmosphere. "Rotten was in a terrible mood," she recalls. "Here was this anarchist group, the Sex Pistols, with people like Richard Branson on the boat that he didn't think should be there. He was furious – he just got to the limit."

Viewing the assembled throng, which he characterised as "the Martini set", Rotten demanded of sympathetic rock scribe Tony Parsons, "Why should we play for them? They don't fuckin' care about us."

McLaren and Branson, every inch the odd couple, stood shoulder to shoulder on the upper deck, like the captain and navigator of a ship bound for who knew where? "We sailed down to Greenwich," remembers Savage, "then back up to Chelsea before the band started to play. We were being shadowed by police launches. They must have got wind of what was going on."

"I think we were on that bloody river for six hours," complained Rotten later. "Every time we tried to get near the Houses of Parliament, police launches shooed us away. It was supposed to be a free-for-all on all celebrations... apart from where we were involved."

Eventually, though, the Queen Elizabeth cruised close enough to the Houses of Parliament. As guests scrambled over chairs, the band took its place in a constricted canvas-covered section of the deck, which had been set aside for their gig, and fired a sonic salvo. "Rotten grinned malevolently," wrote Tony Parsons in the NME, "and they tore into Anarchy In The UK, with the venom of a band who have been denied gigs by bigoted, frightened bureaucrats for too long, and are burning for a chance to prove how great they are live."

As he spat out the words of God Save The Queen, Rotten swung like a monkey from a bar in the roof of the poop-deck. Savage remembers it as, "An incredible feeling, to see the band playing those songs outside the seat of British government," but it was a moment that couldn't last. During I Wanna Be Me, somewhere in the jostle of bodies, Jah Wobble became embroiled in fisticuffs with a French photographer. It was, according to Savage, "a minor scuffle" but it was also the final straw that caused the

PHOTOS: RAY STEVENSON/REX/DAVID WAINRIGHT/RELAY PHOTOS

When the boat comes in: a thoroughly pissed-off (from left) Jones, Cook and Vicious prepare to meet the boys in blue. Queen Elizabeth, 7 June 1977.

vessel's captain to radio for police intervention.

As the boat pulled up at Westminster Pier, Savage could see "about 50 police lined up, waiting for us. There was a stand-off for about 15 minutes while they tried to convince us to leave the boat. People were throwing bottles at them."

Virgin's John Varnom recalls standing next to McLaren as he "raised his fist and, in full view of about six police, screamed, You fucking fascist bastards!'" Moments later, McLaren was being dragged up the gangplank to the waiting Black Marias, and the pierside was turning into a free-for-all.

McLaren's partner Vivienne Westwood claims to have been too drunk to be frightened, "but when I saw Malcolm being dragged off, I couldn't bear the thought, so I yelled, Oh, God, they've got Malcolm. All I wanted to do was get in the van with him and when I did, they charged me with assaulting the police. I didn't assault anyone."

The Pistols' artistic director Jamie Reid reported seeing girls who worked for McLaren's company, Glitterbest, being kicked and punched by officers in the police vans. Parsons too witnessed moments of "sadistic" violence, and for Savage, "It really felt like we were living in a fascist state, and the Jubilee was something that was being used as a distraction to keep our minds off how bad things had become."

Fearing that the band would be the police's main target, two of McLaren's entourage led them away from the conflict but, in all, 11 boat trippers were arrested and taken to Bow Street Station, where Westwood, by her own account, was now revelling in the chaos. Sid Vicious too was enjoying himself in his own unique fashion. "When the cops were looking up my arse for drugs," he revealed, "I was farting all over them and trying to shit on them!"

The following day, McLaren, Westwood and the others appeared in Bow Street Magistrates court, charged variously with obstruction, assault, threatening behaviour and using language likely to cause a breach of the peace. Branson appeared to testify as a character witness for McLaren and, later that same day, the Sex Pistols signed to Virgin for the rest of the world, adding £75,000 to the original £15,000.

In the singles chart for the week ending 11 June, Rod Stewart's I Don't Wanna Talk About It was the Number 1 record in the UK. Immediately below, for the first in the history of the chart, no record title was shown in the Number 2 slot. Ken Berry, MD of Virgin, recalls, "We wouldn't have dreamt of accusing anyone of fiddling with the charts, but the fact that all our research showed that God Save The Queen was easily outselling any other record in the UK did make us wonder..."

It was alleged that the music industry's regulatory body the BPI (British Phonographic Industry) had conspired with the BBC and chart-compilers the BMRB (British Market Research Bureau) to prevent an anti-royal record hitting Number 1 at the height of the Jubilee celebrations. If the allegation was true, it's hard too not to wonder whether some discreet level of governmental pressure might have been applied. McLaren has claimed that CBS, who distributed both the Pistols and the Rod Stewart records, "was saying that we were selling two records to every one of Rod Stewart's."

"You're nicked, son!": McLaren gets led away after calling the ol' bill "fucking fascist bastards".

Galling as it was, failing to reach Number 1 was far from the only consequence of the Pistols' Jubilee shenanigans. One hysterical Sunday tabloid encouraged its readers to 'Punish the punks' and, within days, Jamie Reid had his leg broken by unidentified attackers, Johnny Rotten was attacked and injured by a razor-wielding gang outside a pub in North London and Paul Cook was battered with a crowbar by thugs in Shepherd's Bush. Nor was the violence confined to the Pistols. The Damned's Dave Vanian sustained a dislocated shoulder during an attack at a West Country gig, while Gaye Advert and TV Smith were beaten up by Teddy Boys in Hammersmith. To add insult to injury, on arrival at the hospital, Gaye Advert was told, "What do you expect if you go around dressed like that?"

To make matters worse, the Pistols were now hoist with their own petard, because, as Paul Cook later revealed, the press, the public and even the record company, didn't know whether to believe the attacks were real. "They thought it was another publicity stunt. People coming up and saying, 'Oh, you never got beat up really, did you?'"

Some observers feel that these were the days which really triggered the end of the Pistols. Living in constant fear of attack, injury and possibly death, they retreated from public view into private paranoia, consuming alarming amounts of amphetamines and bickering constantly among themselves. Jon Savage, however, believes that the spirit of the Pistols died aboard the Queen Elizabeth. "The Jubilee boat trip made it obvious that everything was out of whack. Where could they go from there? The only logical step would be for the band to become political terrorists, and that was never going to happen. It took a lot of guts to play that concert on the boat, but it had to end there."

Class of '77

THE SAINTS

The Saints weren't typical punks. They were from Australia for a start. They didn't look like punks either. Which just made them punkest of all. By Roy Wilkinson.

THE FILE

Personnel: Chris Bailey (vocals), Ed Kuepper (guitar), Kym Bradshaw (bass), Ivor Hay (drums).
Hometown: Chelmer, Brisbane
Formed: 1973
The gameplan: To free punk from the bondage of the bondage trouser.
First gig: Brisbane, 1975.
First record: (I'm) Stranded, December 1976.
Biggest UK hit: This Perfect Day (Number 34), July 1977.

If punk was an expression of contempt for the blandishments of the world around you, then, arguably, Australia's The Saints were its purest expression. Unadulterated by such incidentals as tartan bondage trews, sing-alongs with Ronnie Biggs and Jackson Pollock jumpsuits, The Saints were so casually nihilistic that they couldn't even be bothered to dress up for the party.

As much glacially laconic as angry, this basilisk-eyed Brisbane quartet started in 1973, the year in which Iggy And The Stooges released Raw Power. Of course, at this point, Iggy Pop had yet to be installed as the undying punk-rock godhead. Nonetheless, even sequestered out in Australia, The Saints picked up on his potency. And they did so with peculiarly punk-ish insight. At the age of 14, Saints guitarist and songwriter Ed Kuepper was flicking through a record-club mail-order catalogue. "It was a little strange," Kuepper says today. "This brochure actually had a very negative review of The Stooges' Fun House album. It basically said that people these days were too civilised to listen to music as primitive as this. It finished by saying, No better than a fifth-rate Pretty Things. I just thought, Well, that sounds great. When I actually heard the record it was a revelation."

"Suddenly everyone at our shows was spitting because they felt they should. I found it all a little tedious." Ed Kuepper

Inspired by The Stooges and the MC5, in June 1976 Kuepper, together with frontman Chris Bailey, drummer Ivor Hay and bassist Kym Bradshaw, entered a Brisbane studio to record what would be their self-released debut single. The result was (I'm) Stranded, a record which hurled them headlong into the gathering punk cakefight.

(I'm) Stranded was immediately made Single Of The Week in the now-defunct British music weekly Sounds. Fuelled by such UK media exposure, The Saints recorded their debut album, also called (I'm) Stranded, and then relocated to the land of the rising vomit-coloured picture disc.

"We were able to coast in on that," says Kuepper. "If punk hadn't taken off in London, it would have made things a lot more difficult for us. The reviews we got in Australia were atrocious."

The Saints' punk-compatible disdain would eventually take the band onto Top Of The Pops. However, The Saints soon tired of Blighty's punk cavalcade.

"I was initially chuffed to be part of it all," remembers Kuepper. "It was an real opportunity. However, the first ever shows we played in England were at the Roundhouse [in London] with the Ramones and Talking Heads. My amp blew up on both nights, so it didn't go that well. In some ways everything went downhill after that. My real response to punk when in Britain was one of disappointment. The punk scene seemed to quickly become very narrow-minded. Suddenly everyone at our shows was spitting because they felt they should. I found it all a little tedious."

The Saints had always had an agenda that stretched beyond standard punk behaviour patterns. From the outset, they had mixed their surly ramalama with covers of soul standards (Knock On Wood and River Deep, Mountain High). They were a band who liked Noël Coward as well as the Nuggets garage-rock compilation. The British label they had signed to was Harvest – not only home to punk demons Pink Floyd, but also a subsidiary of EMI, the label that was too scared to stick with the Sex Pistols. The Saints and punk were clearly drifting apart.

"The record company were really pissed off that we didn't play up the orthodox punk angle," says Kuepper. "At one point they actually brought in a style consultant who had these fashion sketches that illustrated how we could be more punk. This new look involved some belts and some boots and some spiky hair. All incredibly punky. Needless to say, we didn't dwell too much on this idea. Any pressure like that just made us go in the opposite direction."

The Saints' second album, Eternally Yours, introduced a brass section and replaced bared teeth with a battered romanticism. By the time of third album, 1978's Prehistoric Sounds, they seemed more like a prototype to The Teardrop Explodes than a punk band.

"I think we just got bored," says Kuepper. "I always preferred Giorgio Moroder to, say, Sham 69."

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Ed Kuepper
Kuepper (centre) is still a practising musician. In fact, few practice more. After The Saints, Kuepper formed The Laughing Clowns in 1980. Subsequently, he became a solo artist and has released around 20 solo LPs. His latest album release was Out-Takes, Castaways, Pirate Women & Takeaways, released in January 2002.

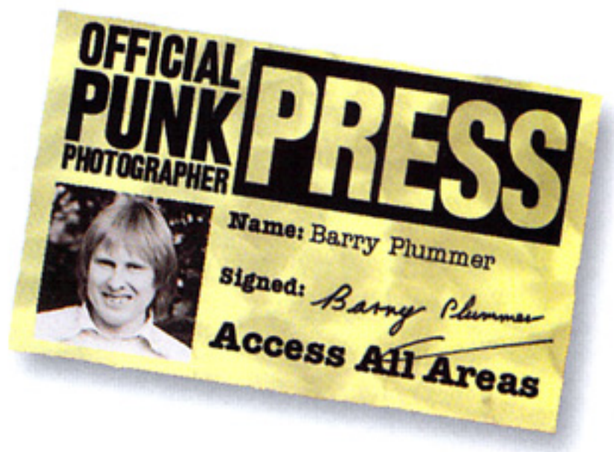
Chris Bailey
In 1980, Bailey (second right) reformed The Saints with a new line-up. Since then, he's combined solo albums with various operations under The Saints banner, including one incarnation that included ex-Birthday Party bassist Tracey Pew. The latest Saints line-up toured in Australia in 2002. The original line-up of The Saints was inducted into the Australian Hall Of Fame on 11 September 2001. "We were hoping for a bit of newspaper coverage," says Ed Kuepper. "Then, a few hours later, something a little more newsworthy happened in America."

Ivor Hay
Hay (far right) works for the South Australian Government, overseeing the award of business grants. "I've tried to hit him for a few bucks," says Ed Kuepper. "He seemed curiously unresponsive."

Kym Bradshaw
After leaving The Saints in 1979, Bradshaw (far left) joined The Jolt's Iain Shedden in mod revival band The Small Hours. Now living in London, according to Kuepper, he is "successfully working in coffee futures or some other branch of financial trading."

PHOTOS: LONDON FEATURES/ IAN DICKSON@LATE20THCENTUARYBOY.COM

Saint misbehavin': frontman, Chris Bailey in 1977.



PICTURE THIS!

Punk almost ruined pop photographer Barry Plummer. But then, as he tells Paul Stokes, it soon helped him become the scene's most prolific snapper.

As a regular freelancer for the Melody Maker between 1975 and 1981, photographer Barry Plummer was ideally placed to capture the punk rock explosion. However, if he'd followed his regular system for choosing which bands to shoot he might have missed it. "You'd photograph who was in the Top 20 because they were the sellable pictures," explains Plummer. "You'd shoot pictures one night, then get back and process it as quickly as possible and push them out to everyone, try them abroad – France, Germany, Japan. I think I usually used to do about 30 prints of each negative, so you shot half the week and printed half the week. It was just anyone really."

Indeed, the mid-'70s teen press lapped up the results. With punk's arrival triggering the decline of that scene, Plummer's career might also have been finished.

"I'd been making quite a bit of money from taking pictures of people like Marc Bolan and David Cassidy. The whole teeny pop thing was really surging ahead in 1975 and then suddenly it almost died overnight and, for once in my life, it all went quite slack," explains Plummer. "I had no one to photograph, there was nothing going on, then punk took off. It was totally different for selling pictures. The teen magazines had folded, so then it was really just Melody Maker."

Fortunately, Plummer was given an introduction right into the heart of the burgeoning scene by Melody Maker hack Caroline Coon, one of the first writers to explore these dangerous new sounds in print.

"The first punk thing I covered was the 100 Club Punk Festival," says Plummer. "I was only roped into that because Caroline Coon had sort of discovered this punk movement coming up, and she said she was going down to cover the festival and wanted me there."

Shooting throughout the festival, Plummer, who now found himself dividing his time between the likes of David Bowie and punk, discovered exactly what it was like to try and take pictures with a noisy, smelly, angry punk crowd behind him.

"You had to try and pick your way to the front, but a lot of the time the punks wouldn't take any notice of you," he recalls. "At a lot of the gigs you couldn't even get to the front, there was no pit or anything like that. I always used to wear my old jacket to punk gigs as it did used to get a bit spitty in those days. That wasn't the best part of it. Often, I'd do two numbers and then get out again."

Despite the off-putting crowds, Plummer became one of the main visual chroniclers of the scene. "I think I must have photographed about 60 punk bands during that period. I'd certainly done all the major ones," he explains. "I remember photographing Sham 69 in Woking, and Jim Pursey told me I had fulfilled one of his ambitions because I got him on the cover of Melody Maker. He was a really nice guy."

In the aftermath of punk, Plummer returned to his tried and tested Top 20 system, as well as doing more work for various record companies, notably with '80s pop icon, Nik Kershaw. However it has been punk that has loomed largest in Plummer's mind. "It is weird, really – I did a lot of work during the '80s and the '90s but I don't really remember much about them. Not like I remember the '70s and the punk scene," he explains. "I seem to have been there much more, physically and mentally." It's also been occupying most of Plummer's time recently. "To be honest, over the last four years, the stuff people are asking me for is from the punk era."

◀ SIOUXSIE SIOUX

100 Club, Oxford Street, 21 September 1976

"This shot was taken on the second night of the 100 Club's Punk Festival. Siouxsie had played on the first night and she was just in the audience watching The Damned. That's Steve Severin, the Banshees' bassist, and the girl was called Debbie, I think. She was just a keen fan, but then Siouxsie had only been a keen fan until the night before."

▶ PUNK GIRL

Reading Festival 25 August 1978

"I've no idea who the girl is. It was taken during Reading's punk year. Sham 69 and The Jam were on and as you can see the girl was in the press enclosure watching the band, so I took a couple of pictures of her and she got a bit funny and said, Don't do that, unless you want to pay me. So I said alright and gave her 50p, which she seemed quite happy with."

GOD SAVE THE QUE
SEX PISTOLS

God Save The Queen
Sex Pistols

SEX PISTOLS (previous pages)

Virgin Record Offices
Notting Hill, 24 May 1977

"I shot this just before the Pistols did a Melody Maker interview. They had all these posters in the office so I got Steve [Jones] to help me put them up – that's why he's got the staple gun in his hand. I brought the windmill along to add to the Jubilee theme, but Sid [Vicious] grabbed it to hide a spot he had on his nose. Throughout the shoot Steve was trying to pull it off him."

▲ VIRGIN RECORDS

Notting Hill Gate
6 November 1977

"This was the old Virgin shop in Notting Hill Gate, I remember the Melody Maker rang up and said to get to Virgin quickly because the Sex Pistols were making an appearance there. When I got there the Virgin boss Richard Branson and some of his staff were there, while the shop was in complete chaos, all they were selling to people was Never Mind The Bollocks."

▼ THE STRANGLERS

Battersea Park
16 September 1978

"As the band were playing the strippers came on and then a few of the lads in the crowd got excited and joined them. Then the law turned up and booked all the strippers, but they didn't cart anyone off. I don't know who called the police, someone must have decided they didn't like it and traipsed off to the nearest pay phone which was quite a distance away."

"I always used to wear my old jacket to punk gigs as it used to get a bit spitty."

◀ DEBBIE HARRY

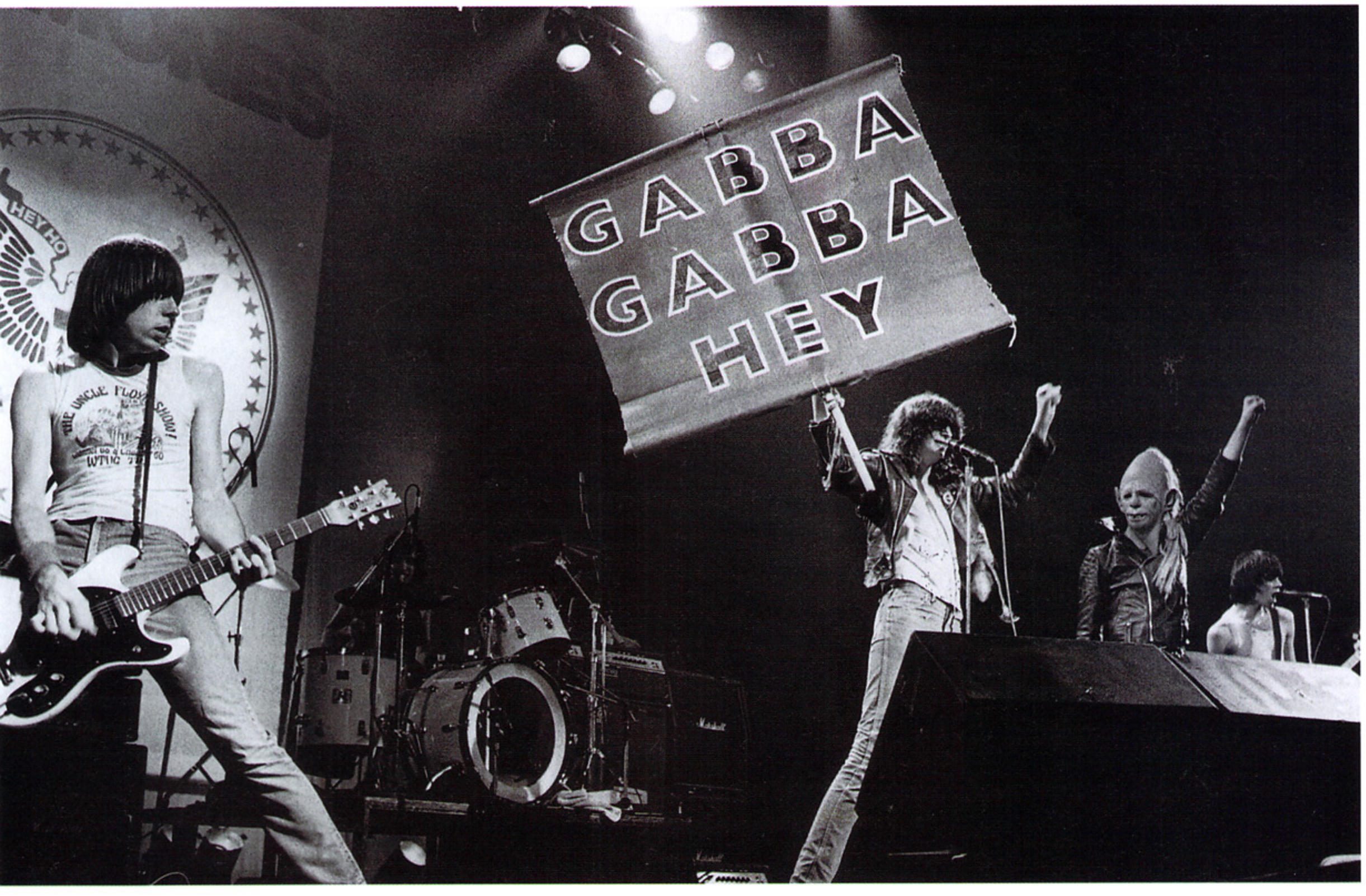
Private Stock offices Notting Hill, 22 May 1977

"This shot was taken on the roof of Blondie's record company, Private Stock. It was quite a nice day so we thought it would be a good idea to take some shots up there with Debbie. Looking back, I wish I'd shot it in colour. But then I never used it at the time because I was working for a black and white magazine and you got into the habit of thinking in monotone."

▼ THE RAMONES

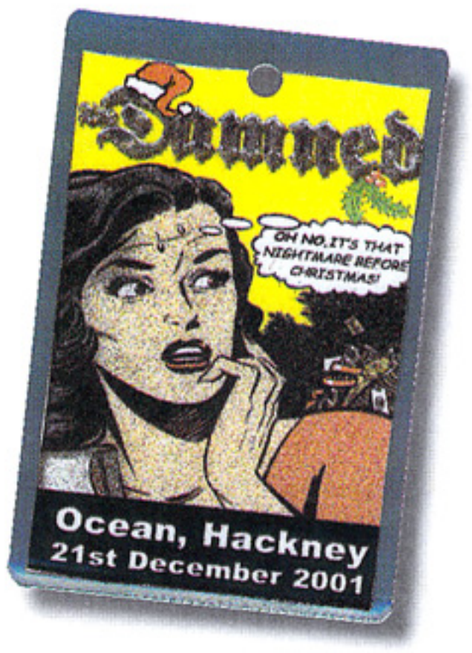
Rainbow Theatre, London 31 December 1977

"I went to see The Ramones because they were over here and I think it was the first time they did the Rainbow. I just tried to shoot everyone I could around that time. The person standing next to Joey Ramone is someone they brought out of the audience. He came out with that weird mask on, did this little parade and then disappeared again."



Still not being sensible: the Captain searches for that fourth chord at a memorial to Joey Ramone, Hammerstein Ballroom, New York, 19 May 2001.

Last Man Standing



They said punk wouldn't last six months. And yet, 25 years on from their heyday, the original punk bands are still playing. But is anyone listening?

THE DAMNED

The Damned may have released the first punk 45, but according to Captain Sensible, they'll be the last old-timers still standing.

Original members: Dave Vanian (vocals), Captain Sensible (guitar).

Other current members: Patricia Morrison (bass), Monty Oxy Moron (keyboards), Pinch (drums).

So, you're still touring – good crowds? "Well, thankfully guitars are back, big time. And there's a constant supply of these nu-metal and punk bands – mainly American – citing The Damned as a major influence and turning their young fans onto us so that the jolly old gigs are full to the rafters these days. Gawd bless Limp Bizkit, whoever he is."

What songs are you playing? "It changes about a bit. On our latest trip to the States we played a pretty rugged '77-style set. It included I Fall, my favourite from the first album, which almost became the first UK punk single. It was out-voted in favour of New Rose because it was considered too radical for a nation obsessed with The Osmonds and Yes. We mix the old material with a smattering of tunes from our current Grave Disorder album, which is a spectacular collection of top tunes in all good record shops now, blah blah..."

Show-stopping number? "It depends on which section of the crowd yer talking about. I mean, the goth birds would probably tend to favour Eloise more than the pogo/mosh brigade, who go berserk as soon as we start playing Smash It Up."

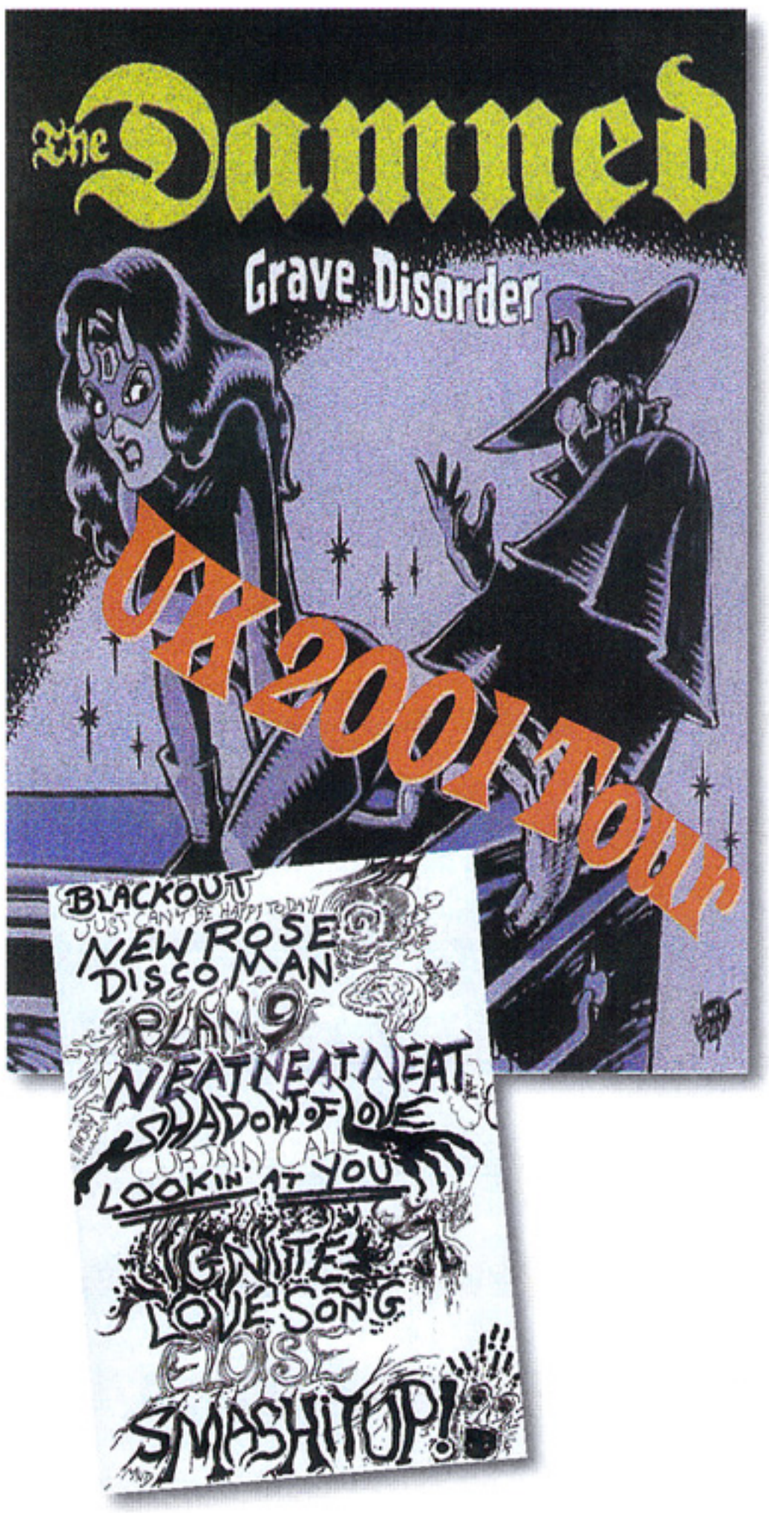
What makes you keep doing it? "Well, we are pretty good at what we do. It's a glorious noise The Damned make and Vanian's voice is better than ever. He's developed into a fine crooner over the years. You see, we were slagging off the old farts of the '70s because of their appalling rock star behaviour and 'up yer own bum' twiddly-diddly musical self-indulgence. I honestly believe The Damned still have more raw passion and sheer musical verve than pretty much anyone on the scene today, so continue we will. Plus, it's bloody good fun and the beer's free!"

How long will you carry on? "When the music biz, charts and TV are dominated by such appalling crap as Popstars, and all these cynical boy bands raking in the cash, there's probably more need for a bit of blatant warts-and-all honesty than ever. That's what our role in life is. I mean, who would you rather have? Gareth, Will and Ronan Keating? Or Rotten, Strummer and Jello Biafra?"

So you make a living out of it? "If someone had told me then that I'd still be doing this 25 years on I'd probably have shrieked with laughter. But I don't have a fast cars and champagne lifestyle, although I'm not too bad on the dosh front, ta very much. Mind you, when I left the Fairfield Halls in Croydon, where I was the resident toilet cleaner, they said I'd done such a good job on the bogs that I could go back there anytime if the showbiz thing fell through. Thankfully, I've not had to take 'em up on the offer so far."

So punk's not dead? "Not while there are leaders like Blair and Bush with their insane corporate policies to write lyrics about. The '60s had Joan Baez and Bob Dylan, now it's rap and punk that provides the protest songs. Punk's a forward-thinking anti-establishment thing... have you seen those anti-globalisation protesters smashing the windows of McDonald's? That's punk!"

Louisa Carr



PHOTOS: RETNA

STIFF LITTLE FINGERS

Still playing after all these years, Jake Burns finds there still is a silver lining to the legacy of Stiff Little Fingers.

Original members: Jake Burns (vocals, guitar).
Other current members: Bruce Foxton (bass), Ian McCallum (guitar), Steve Grantley (drums).
So, you're still touring – good crowds? "When we first reformed in 1987 we could play anywhere and sell it out. Now we play the major cities. We've just done a three-week UK tour – Glasgow Barrowlands, The Forum in London and, apart from two gigs, I think the rest all sold out. The crowd tend to be a mix of new and old fans. When SLF started out, bands like The Damned were always citing Iggy as an influence and his career took off again. Now we've got Green Day and The Offspring citing us. Being namedropped in High Fidelity helped."
What songs are you playing? "We're now into our 25th year so we play a selection from our whole career, from Suspect Device to new songs."
Show-stopping number? "Obviously Alternative Ulster gets a huge response, as does Silver Lining, or our cover of Bob Marley's Johnny Was."
What made you do it again? "We were skint. We wanted to go home for Christmas so we played a few gigs. The response was amazing so we've been doing it ever since."
How long will you carry on? "Someone called out at a recent gig, Here's to the next 25 years!, and I had to shudder. I hope it won't be that long."
Do you make a living out of it? "Yes, after 25 years I've got to start seeing it as a career. Just before we reformed I got a job, so I went from no job to two jobs. I worked as a Radio 1 producer on the DLT show. It got too hectic so the producing had to go. It was an easy decision to make: I once found myself discussing the merits of a Jason Donovan single and thought, Has it really come to this?"
So, punk's not dead? "I believe in the idea behind punk – the DIY spirit, that you shouldn't bow down to anyone and the call for individuality. Too many bands seem to think punk means dying your hair the same colour."
Lois Wilson

Jake Burns only lifts a solitary stiff little finger these days.

Jimmy Pursey braces himself for another Hurry Up Harry encore.

SHAM 69

The self-proclaimed 'dustman of punk', these days Jimmy Pursey is more inclined to play anthems like If The Kids Are United than comedy cuts like Hurry Up Harry.

Original members: Jimmy Pursey (singer) and Dave Parsons (guitar).
Other current members: Matt Sergeant (bass) and Ian Whitewood (drummer).
So, you're still touring – good crowds? "We play places like the Brighton Concorde. That's always one of my favourite gigs. Last time Kevin Rowland came up to me and said, Fuck me, Jim, you're still an entertainer. When I started doing it again it was in the late-'80s – it was very brave because I didn't go out and do the straight revival, where it would just appeal to the last 10 punks in the area. Like Lydon did with PiL, I tried to show that there was another appendix or addendum to punk. What you've got going on now with your Limp Bizkits and bands like Sum 41 and Blink-182 is a skateboard and snowboard scene that needed a music to go with it. There's always been a punk bubble underneath."
What songs are you playing? "Anything from the last 27 years. It's always going to have the pop punk and the old-school stuff. Hersham Boys and If The Kids Are United are always in there, but Hurry Up Harry is the one I'll get fed up with sometimes. It can get a bit like Right, that was the comedy, here's the politics."
Show-stopping number? "If The Kids Are United – it's nearly always that, though sometimes Borstal Breakout really runs it close."
What makes you keep doing it? "I stopped because of the skinheads and the Nazi violence and people trying to hijack my gigs. What made me do it again? Sex and drugs and rock'n'roll." [laughs]
How long will you carry on? "As long as there's the sex, drugs and rock'n'roll." [laughs again]
Do you make a living out of it? "I just about get by. I'm in a situation where I can love it or leave it, but I love going out there and doing it and it pays my mortgage. I'm just Jimmy and that's me, this is what I do. What excites me more is the fact that people are still listening and I hope one day the music will be heard in a different way."
So, punk's not dead? "I think that punk is most certainly dead, as something that went on for about six months, 500 yards around Oxford Street, and was really seen off by all that squabbling. But it lives on as something that people have inside of them. Obviously all those people who came to see the bands, and were in the bands at the time, are now 40-year-olds and have a certain amount of control over their lives. It sort of lives on as an attitude for them, like a religion I suppose."
Richard Fairclough

THE STRANGLERS

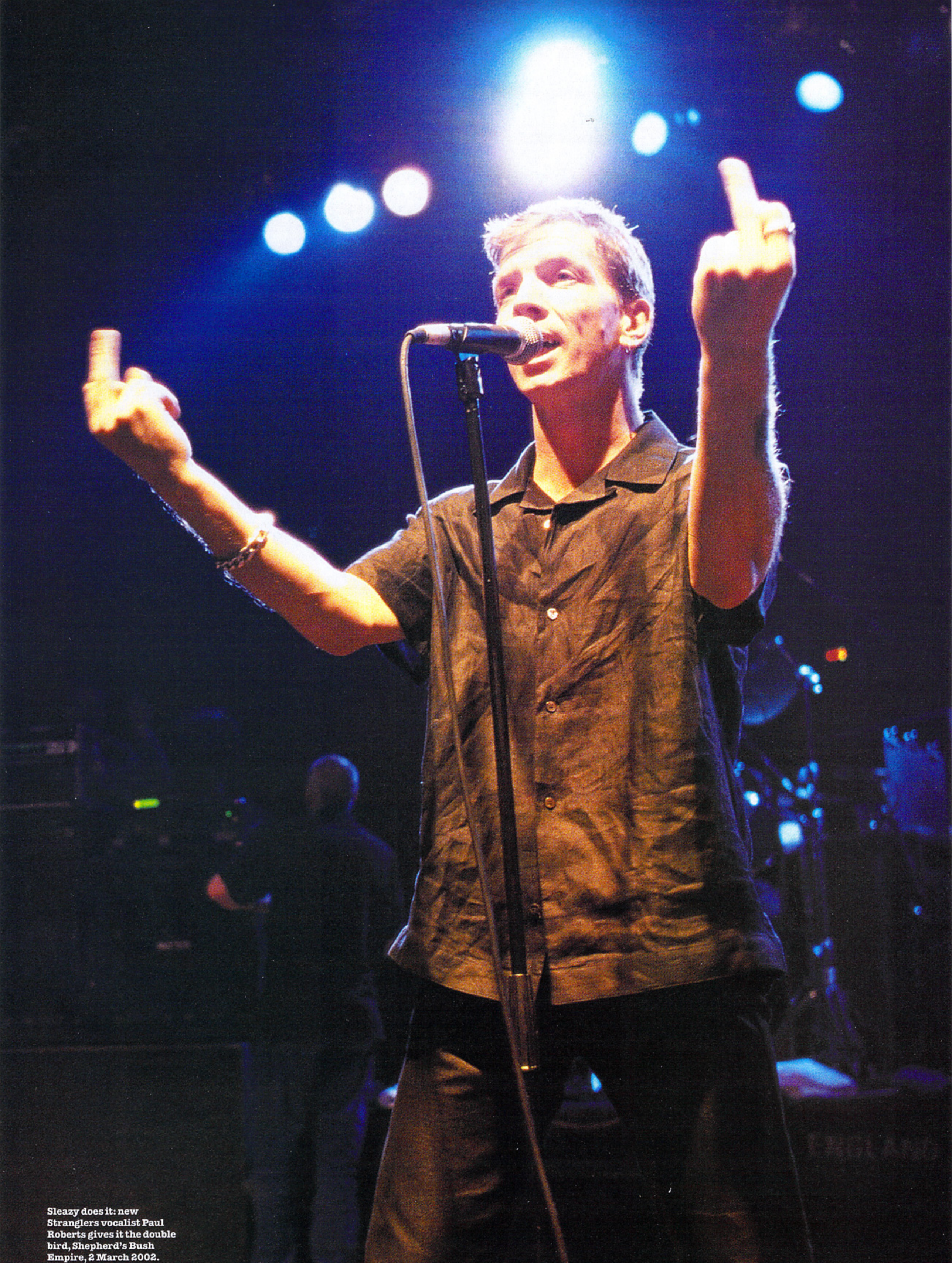
They might have lost their singer along the way, but Jean-Jacques Burnel keeps The Stranglers on the road.

Original members: Jean-Jacques Burnel (bass/vocals), Jet Black (drums), Dave Greenfield (keyboards).
Other current members: Paul Roberts (vocals), Baz Warne (guitar).
So, you're still touring – good crowds? "We sold out Shepherd's Bush Empire in March. We also play a few festivals in Europe and can play to an audience of anywhere between 2,000 and about 60,000. This year we wanted to try out some not so loud stuff. Semi-electro acoustic – I won't say unplugged because that's bollocks, it's just with acoustic guitars but you still plug 'em in! We did one set of that, then one set of really full-on loud stuff and that worked pretty well. Three years ago we played the Royal Albert Hall with an orchestra and that sold out."
What songs are you playing? "The set's a mix of old and new but we've got so much material to choose from now. Basically it's a mixture of raves from the grave and stuff we're currently working on."
Show-stopping number? "In Britain it's generally the punky stuff, such as No More Heroes, and then of course there's Golden Brown. It depends what's happened – for instance, Tori Amos recently covered one of our tracks, Strange Little Girl, and it did really well in the States, getting to Number 4."
What made you do it again? "We never really stopped. When Hugh left in 1990 we carried on. I'd introduced another guitarist [John Ellis] into the band before Hugh left because he wasn't playing so much. The four of us, without Hugh, were left with a whole album's worth of songs. Although I'd sang a third of all The Stranglers' songs, obviously Hugh was still regarded as the lead singer. So we were farting around in the rehearsal studio for months trying to get me to sing these songs. But apart from a couple that I could get away with, it wasn't happening. Paul Roberts found us and convinced us he was our new singer."

"I'm privileged that I've not become a sad old fucker playing seedy dives."
JJ Burnel

How long will you carry on? "Provided none of the original three die, we'll make our 30th anniversary [laughs]. Jet's a big man and he is getting on, but he's built like an ox."
Do you make a living out of it? "It's been nearly 30 years without a proper job! I'm privileged really. You're privileged if you don't become a sad old fucker playing seedy dives. If you're still selling records, have respect and get to record then that's fantastic."
So punk's not dead? "We've now got a lot of young people coming to see us. We're getting a lot of 16 and 17-year-olds now. All the American bands of the past few years have been making our old stuff sound remarkably modern."
Louisa Carr

PHOTOS: MICK HUTSON/REDFERNS/HAYLEY MADDEN/RETNA



Sleazy does it: new Stranglers vocalist Paul Roberts gives it the double bird, Shepherd's Bush Empire, 2 March 2002.

SIOUXSIE & THE BANSHEES

Siouxsie has reformed the Banshees and is just about to go on tour again.

Original members: Siouxsie (vocals), Steve Severin (bass).
Other current members: Budgie (drums).
So you're still touring – good crowds? "We're definitely playing four cities in America, and maybe Washington DC. All the theatres are between 1,500-3,000 capacity and then there's the Coachella Festival. In Chicago it sold out in two hours so we added another date. We really didn't know what to expect at all."
What songs will you be playing? "We have our A and B wish lists. We're playing songs we didn't play in the last five years, early things and things we've never played."
What made you do it again? "We've been talking for about a year or so, ever since a biographer began doing interviews. Always in the back of my mind was the question, I wonder if we could play music together again? So when Severin called and asked if we wanted to do the Coachella Festival, and we'd been getting on with each other, we said, Why not?"
How long will you carry on? "It's a one-off for now. There's been no talk of getting back together."
Do you make a living out of it? "It took us a long time to understand the industry wouldn't supply us with what we needed, so we started our own label – Sioux – and it's been hard figuring that all out. We've also been recording the new Creatures album for so long now. It's been a struggle as we've done everything ourselves."
So punk's not dead? "We're playing in San Francisco with eX-Girl, a Japanese version of The Slits, and Tribe 8, some tough girls we'd played with before. I'm really excited because it's about time there were good female bands out there. But, honestly, I've lived in rural France for 10 years so I don't really know what's going on with music. One band I do like is Radiohead."
Daphne Carr

Siouxsie: er, everyone give the old dame of punk a hand.

No teenager, but still kicking: The Undertones' Damian O'Neill rocks on in 2001.

THE UNDERTONES

These days Feargal Sharkey might no longer be behind the mic, but guitarist Damian O'Neill is still getting his teenage kicks.

Original members: Damian O'Neill (guitar), John O'Neill, (guitar), Billy Doherty (drums), Mickey Bradley (bass).
Other current members: Paul McClune (vocals).
So, you're still touring – good crowds? "In Dublin we get 1,200 people – about 400 elsewhere, but we do alright. We do little stretches of five shows and festivals. We're even getting younger people in."
What songs are you playing? "Mainly the first two albums. All the hits – Jimmy Jimmy, You've Got My Number, It's Going To Happen, You're Welcome. It's more difficult to do stuff off the last album, Sin Of Pride. We have been writing new songs. I was dubious whether it would work without Feargal, but they're really good so we'll see what the reaction is. We don't want to ruin the name of The Undertones. Whenever I used to hear of bands reforming I'd always think, Shite, why?, but when you do it it's great."
Show-stopping number? "It has to be Teenage Kicks really. That's the one. We normally play it during the set but if it's a really great gig we'll end with it as well."
What made you do it again? "We were invited to play at the Galway Arts Festival a couple of years ago and for some reason John and I said yes. We had the lead singer of the Saw Doctors with us as we knew Feargal wouldn't do it – I don't know if we even bothered asking. We got offered a shitload of money – a quarter of a million or something – by the Mean Fiddler to play a few years ago and he wouldn't do it then, so there's no way he would now. I respect that. It's a shame though because he doesn't know what he's missing. But we wrote the songs, he didn't – so perhaps we're closer to it."
How long will you carry on? "I don't know. The new recordings are the test. If they're no good we might call it quits next year. We'd like to tour America, but it all depends if people can get time off work. They're all in Ireland and I'm in London so I'll go over to play with them and when I come back I'll sort of forget I'm in The Undertones. You're a pop star for the day, then back to mundane life again. I think it's more dignified that way. You don't want to end up a punk showband."
Do you make a living out of it? "We haven't given up our day jobs. Mickey and Paul are radio producers, John works at the Nerve Centre, and Billy works with computers. I put an LP of instrumentals out through Poptones last year called A Quiet Revolution. Otherwise I'm a house husband, because I've got a young baby."
So punk's not dead? "Well, it depends. There's always the ideal – trying not to sell out. But there's some good bands around like The White Stripes and The Strokes."
Jon Bennett

UK SUBS

Always the oldest of the punk rockers, at 58 years old, Charlie Harper is still knocking 'em dead on the punk circuit.

Original members: Charlie Harper (vocals), and for gigs in the USA, Nicky Garrett (guitar).
Other current members: Alan Campbell (guitar), Jason Wilder (drums), Simon Zero (bass).
So, you're still touring – good crowds? "We're touring Britain, then Europe and America. A couple of weeks ago we flew out to Serbia and played to 800 people, but when we come back to England it's usually 150 to 200."
What songs are you playing? "All the classics. We want to play the favourites, see the audience go wild."
Show-stopping number? "Warhead, I suppose. But we have a new song called Riot which keeps the slamming going – and we end with Stranglehold. By then the place is a mess. Our last two shows ended after 20 minutes as the promoters feared their club might be destroyed."
What makes you keep doing it? "It used to be the beer, but I've got to slow down. I'm 58 and I was feeling it a bit."
How long will you carry on? "As long as my health can stand it. The band has a revolving door policy. We get different people in. Tess from Discharge and Tony Barber from the Buzzcocks stood in for our Hogmanay festival this year. But I don't believe in retiring. I love it. I love food and beer and travelling. I love testing each region's specialities and also I love visiting castles and old battle sites. It's a great education to travel."
Do you make a living out of it? "I haven't got a day job. I scrape by – what saves us is our merchandise. We don't just do patches and T-shirts. My girlfriend makes mini-skirts and bras and really great baby clothes. Even a bag that looks like a rolled-up sleeping bag, which is actually really a cooler bag for smuggling beer into festivals. Bouncers never spot it. One day we'll strike it rich!"
So punk's not dead? "Not at all. The Pistols are even getting back together. There's still a scene. It's quite exciting, lots of beer."
Jon Bennett

Charlie Harper: only here for the beer.

PHOTOS: MICK HUTSON/REDFERNS

Still caught by the Buzz: Buzzcocks 2002 (from left) Pete Shelley, Philip Barker and Tony Barber.

BUZZCOCKS

Guitarist Steve Diggle stills finds life on the road with the Buzzcocks as fun as it ever was.

Original members: Pete Shelley (vocals/guitar) and Steve Diggle (guitar/vocals).

Other current members: Tony Barber (bass), Philip Barker (drums).

So, you're still touring – good crowds? "Yeah. We played Argentina, Brazil and America last year. In Brazil it's crowds of up to 5,000. In America we do the Fillmore and The Palace, which hold 3,000. England's got harder. In America there's always an audience for rock'n'roll music and amazingly two-thirds are new kids."

What songs are you playing? "A whole mixture. We had an album out a couple of years back called Modern and we do half of that and half stuff from over the years."

Show-stopping number? "Obviously the old singles – Orgasm Addict, Ever Fallen In Love, Boredom... but Harmony In My Head seems to go down best live."

What makes you keep doing it? "It's too late to become an accountant [laughs]. I started when I was 20 and it's become my way of life. I've been through it all: the drink, the drugs, the birds, the madness, the lot – for 25 years. I still do it and survive it all. I've never been addicted you see, used it rather than it using me. You see Robbie Williams who has a taste for six months, has a major crisis and goes on about it forever. I ain't one of them. It's part of being on the road, otherwise you go back to your room and have a cup of cocoa."

Do you make a living out of it? "God yeah. The house in Highgate was paid for a long time ago and the royalty cheques still arrive from EMI. I've never bought speedboats or took up golf, the only extravagance we have is champagne backstage. We used to have six or seven pints, but that's a bit much when you're jumping around – so we got into champagne! It's rocket fuel."

How long will you carry on? "As long as I enjoy it. We've just finished a new album. I did six songs, Pete [Shelley] did six others and it was a really interesting process. For me it's the writing, the challenge of creating the songs. That's all I've been interested in since school when I fell in love with my English teacher."

So punk's not dead? "No, probably not. Essentially the fundamental thing was the attitude. Putting two fingers up to the establishment. It was barren then, the world was black and white. The important thing is still the attitude – don't be blinded by authority. We could do with a bit more punk now I reckon. That Pop Idol thing is so insipid it's ridiculous. I'd hate to be that age and I just hope my son never hears that Gareth Gates record. I don't want him to influence my son with his thick fucking ways. It should be about soul searching, it should be inspirational. What have Gareth or Will got? They're Redcoats and I don't think that's very inspiring. Punk's still alive if people still dig into it."

Jon Bennett

"I've done it all: the drinks, the drugs, the birds, the madness. I still do it and I still survive."
Steve Diggle

THE 100 BEST PUNK ALBUMS

★★★★★ Indispensable
★★★★ Excellent
★★★ Good
★★ Average
★ Poor

The Adverts
Crossing The Red Sea With The Adverts
FIRE/DEVIL'S OWN JUKEBOX
SDEVIL 901CD

On the tail of their Top 20 hit Gary Gilmore's Eyes, this album captured the ramshackle buzz of The Adverts at their best. Produced by John Leckie (whose later production work included The Stones Roses and Radiohead) the album boils with the bravado and arrogance of early punk. It's a collection of their first four singles and album-only tracks like New Church, Bombsite Boy and Great British Mistake. Nothing can touch the raw smarminess of early singles Bored Teenagers and One Chord Wonders, with lyrics celebrating the inept energy of Gaye Advert's bass and Laurie Driver's patchwork under-drumming. The recently remastered album boasts an impressive five rare live recordings. Like being there *sans* gob. ★★★
Daphne Carr
Extras: *bonus single and live versions.*

The Adverts
Cast Of Thousands
ANAGRAM CD PUNK 102

By the time this album hit, critics were ready to stick the knife into anything penned by the punk-poet TV Smith, and this auteur attempt gave them plenty of entry points. Session keyboardist Tim Cross (who continues to play with Smith to this day) entered as a new member, coating each track with piano robbed of depth by straight-world producer Tom Newman's unsympathetic mix. Smith's lyrical stretches come over on his acoustic interludes (I Will Walk You Home) and his literate leanings take a tone of self-doubt on the title track, where forthright confessions of the band's unpopularity only helped dig its grave. ★★★
Daphne Carr
Extras: *four tracks of B-sides.*

Alternative TV
The Image Has Cracked
ANAGRAM CD PUNK 24

Having already made his name on the London punk scene as founder of seminal fanzine Sniffin' Glue, it seemed logical for Mark Perry to follow his own advice and form a band. Inspired more by punk's 'anything goes' attitude than King's Road fashion and no-play thrashing, Alternative TV's splenetic debut was equal parts frustration and idealism. Eclectic, awkward and inventive, although The Image Has Cracked appeared to pay lip service to punk with anti-anthems like Action Time Vision, the live open-mic jam Alternatives revealed Perry's growing disillusionment with its stylistic straitjacketing and dilution by the mainstream. Tellingly, ATV would split a year later, after releasing a painfully experimental second album, Vibing Up The Senile Man. ★★★
Andrew Carden
Extras: *11 bonus tracks.*

Angelic Upstarts
Angel Dust – Best Of The Angelic Upstarts
ANAGRAM CDMGRAM 7

Adopting the politicised stance of The Clash and paving the way for the "anarcho-punk" of the '80s, the Angelic Upstarts' Thomas 'Mensi' Mensforth composed modern rebel songs that expanded the musical palette of punk. Mensi took on the Tories, police brutality (The Murder Of Liddle Towers), unemployment (Two Million Voices) and racism (I Understand, about the death of a young Rastafarian while on remand). Their gigs soon became a National Front stomping ground, despite their material attacking racism and fascism, while their controversial Brighton Bomb single stalled their career in 1983, although Mensi reformed the group in the early '90s. ★★★
Martin O'Gorman

Gaye Advert: ace of bass.

The Avengers
Died For Your Sins
LOOKOUT LK217

Along with The Nuns and Crime, San Francisco's The Avengers were key in establishing a punk foothold in the heart of hippydom. They opened for the Sex Pistols at their infamous final show at The Winterland and the latter's Steve Jones even produced The Avengers' second EP. Actually buying their records, however, is a difficult business: the quartet were only together for two years and never released an LP. This posthumous collection of breakneck live flotsam and rough-edged studio rehearsal tapes captures the band's fury. ★★★
Pat Long

Black Flag
Damaged
SST 007

OK, so not technically in our timeframe – or even technically punk – Black Flag nevertheless are worthy of inclusion here as avatars of the hardcore scene, a punk offshoot that upped the velocity, volume and noxiousness and provided a convenient soundtrack for sun-kissed SoCal boneheads to flip their parents off to. Featuring future alt-superstar Henry Rollins, Black Flag's 1981 first LP is also their most furious, dark and downright funniest record they made. ★★★
Pat Long

CHECK THIS OUT

Blondie
Parallel Lines
EMI 5335992

Parallel Lines would become Blondie's most successful album. Produced by glam-rock impresario Mike Chapman and built on the stout pillars of its four hit singles, Hanging On The Telephone, Picture This, Sunday Girl and Heart Of Glass, this saw Blondie finally setting their own agenda, with Debbie Harry buffing her new wave knowingly dolly-bird-esque personality on the shiny chrome of some of '70s pop's most mellifluous three-minute vehicles. It sold a cool 20 million copies, and in the droll, chart-topping Heart Of Glass (an ancient Blondie original once presciently dubbed The Disco Song) effortlessly anticipated the next two decade's-worth of rock/dance cross-fertilisation. ★★★★
David Sheppard
Extras: *One bonus track and two live recordings.*

Blondie
Blondie
EMI 5335962

The third of the original CBGB acts to make a long-player (after Patti Smith and the Ramones), Blondie's debut proved there was more to the sound of the Bowery than poetic rock and blitzkrieg bop. Produced by '60s girl group alumnus Richard Gottehrer and full of Spector-esque hooks, neo-surf guitar twang and Debbie Harry's knowing, sensual vocals, this was first and foremost classic pop – its proudly worn influences about as novel as the band's mod suit and skinny tie uniforms. For all that, the standouts remain coolly provocative tracks like the New York Dolls-tinted X Offender, In The Flesh and Rip Her To Shreds, the titles alone becoming benchmarks for the shock first, ask questions later credo of punk's camp followers. ★★★★
David Sheppard
Extras: *Five bonus tracks including demos and single versions.*

Blondie
Plastic Letters
EMI 5335982

Frank Infante may have replaced the disgruntled Gary Valentine on bass, but the latter's brilliant (I'm Always Touched By Your) Presence Dear was a highlight here, along with a cover of Randy & The Rainbows' '60s hit Denise, neatly gender-switching title to Denis. An international hit, Denis established Blondie's lengthy residence at the business end of the world's hit parades. With Gottehrer again at the controls, this was music still in thrall to the bubble-gum symphonies of the previous decade, though the increasing sophistication of Chris Stein, Debbie Harry and Jimmy Destri's songwriting meant the Blondie brand was quickly evolving into state-of-the-art new wave pop. ★★★★
David Sheppard
Extras: *Five bonus tracks.*

The Boys
Alternative Chartbusters
CAPTAIN OI! AHOY CD 104

British power pop singles don't come any better than Brickfield Nights, the lead-off cut here. Its pounding Be My Baby intro kick-starts a fine album in which new wave energy and '60s beat values are combined to joyous effect. With the punk affectations of their debut jettisoned in favour of an unashamedly commercial approach, the group resembled nothing so much as a boys-only Blondie, both musically and in the record's enviably glamorous cover photo. Would-be terrace anthem Cast Of Thousands is the rowdy closer. (Punk fact:

Mad about The Boys: the lads show off their, er, boyish charms.

bassist Kid Reid later joined the board at Nottingham Forest). ★★★
Matthew Lees

Extras: *Five demos of previously unreleased songs.*

The Boys

The Boys

CAPTAIN OI! AHOY CD 101

Matt Dangerfield and Casino Steel formed The Boys in 1976 from the remnants of legendary pre-punk collective London SS. They were tight and well-drilled, with fast melodies and a handsome punk-Quarrymen look. This debut LP contained the group's two neat lout-pop singles, First Time and I Don't Care, and entered the charts at Number 50 in August 1977. Unluckily, Elvis's death that month stalled the record completely. Concentrating all their efforts on The King's catalogue, RCA actually stopped pressing The Boys, it disappeared from record shops, and the chance to get significant Year Zero action was gone. ★★★
Matthew Lees

Extras: *Eight bonus tracks.*

Buzzcocks

Time's Up

THE GREY AREA SCRATCH2CD

In October 1976, the Buzzcocks squeezed their equipment onto a bus and headed to Greater Manchester's Revolution Studio. For an outlay of "about £45" they recorded 11 songs, including a version of Orgasm Addict and covers of The Troggs' I Can't Control Myself and Captain Beefheart's I Love You, You Big Dummy. The band made no attempt to officially release the recordings at the time, but they surfaced as a bootleg, one now legitimately available. The only album-length documentation of Howard Devoto's time as Buzzcocks frontman, Time's Up, is a hugely evocative mix of febrile urgency and high-concept sloganeering. ★★★
Roy Wilkinson

Extras: *Enhanced CD concert coverage, Lesser Free Trade Hall, July 1976.*

Buzzcocks

Another Music In A Different Kitchen

EMI 5344052

By 1978, Pete Shelley was the Buzzcocks' singer and the band were releasing their debut album proper. Recorded in London and produced by Martin Rushent, Another Music... lacked a single of the scale of the later Ever Fallen In Love (With Someone You Shouldn't've). But, beyond this, it was a fascinating record, one that highlighted an agenda oblivious to punk's more doctrinaire blueprints. There were compact Shelley love songs like Fiction Romance, but there was also the metronomic, Can-influenced groove of Moving Away From The Pulsebeat. ★★★
Roy Wilkinson

Extras: *Four bonus tracks.*

Buzzcocks

A Different Kind Of Tension

Out of print but available as part of the Product box set

EMI PRODUCT1

One school of thought says, by the time of 1979's A Different Kind Of Tension, the Buzzcocks were beginning to run out of steam. However, in a song like You Say You Don't Love Me, this album contains the glorious epitome of Pete Shelley's fathomlessly wistful take on affairs of the heart. I Don't Know What To Do With My Life is superficially close to punk's basic tenets, but it also has an arch intelligence that epitomises this album's sly profundity. By now the Buzzcocks were a long way from their Devoto-piloted origins, but here they still had much to say. ★★
Roy Wilkinson

CHECK THIS OUT

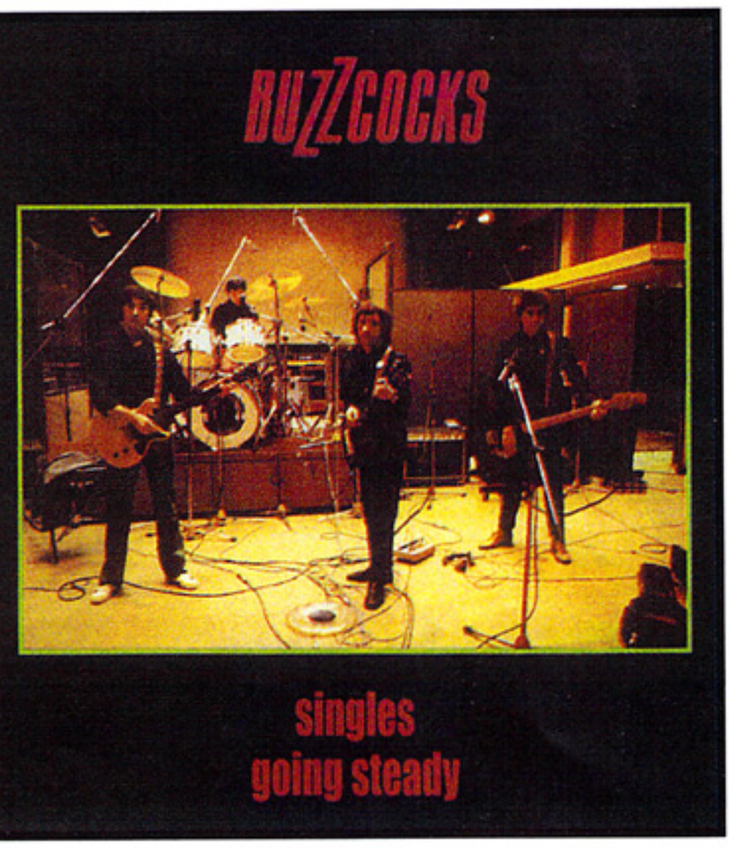
Buzzcocks

Singles Going Steady

EMI 5344422

Between 1977 and '79, the Buzzcocks produced an incredible run of eight singles (all included here) that proved them the undisputed masters of angst-fuelled pop punk. They defined the twisted love song on A-sides Orgasm Addict, a breathless ode to masturbation, the brooding What Do I Get?, the recriminatory Promises and their masterpiece Ever Fallen In Love (With Someone You Shouldn't've)?. Flipsides like the philosophical Why Can't I Touch It?, the scratchy Noise Annoys and the despondent Something's Gone Wrong Again show an equally appealing, angular, experimental side to the band as they break free of the punk straitjacket. Essential listening!
★★★★★
Jon Harrington

Extras: *Eight tracks mopping up the later A and B-sides.*



Extras: *The whole album, plus the Buzzcocks' other albums and live recordings from the Lyceum.*

Buzzcocks

Love Bites

EMI 5344042

This hastily conceived second LP, released just seven months after the band's debut to capitalise on their initial success, may suffer from a feeling of world-weariness – Love Is Lies, Nothing Left and Late For The Train hint at the strain involved in its making – but there is still much to treasure in Pete Shelley's magnificent Ever Fallen In Love (With Someone You Shouldn'tve)?, the sarcastic Operator's Manual, the sharp, cynical blast of Just Lust and the enchanting conundrum Nostalgia, "for an age yet to come". ★★
Jon Harrington

Extras: *Four bonus tracks – Love You More, Promises and their B-sides.*

1976. Undeterred, however, October penned Right To Work and after a further two line-up changes recorded the track for Miles Copeland's Step Forward label. A sub three-minute vitriolic blast powered by October's aggressive vocal, Right To Work soon became a working-class anthem, as did High Rise Living and Urban Kids – all contained herein – earning Chelsea a reputation for being the *other* punk band with a social conscience. ★★★
Lois Wilson

The Clash

The Clash

COLUMBIA 4953442

Johnny Rotten hated it. Joe Strummer loved it. Badly produced, but brimming with tunes, anger and energy, this was the archetypal punk record. Career Opportunities ("Do you wanna make tea at the BBC?") noted unemployment was growing, I'm So Bored With The USA unsuccessfully tried to convince Britain's punk fraternity that far from being bored, The Clash were obsessed with the place, and Garage Land is fabulous self-mythologising. Most peculiar of all is a lengthy version of Junior Murvin's Police And Thieves which showed that they not only adored reggae, they understood it too.
★★★★★
John Aizlewood

Chelsea

The Punk Singles Collection 1977-82

CAPTAIN OI! AHOY CD 98

It looked all over for vocalist Gene October's Chelsea when Billy Idol, Tony James and John Towe ran off to form Generation X after one month of rehearsals and a support slot with The Stranglers in November

The Clash
Given 'Em Enough Rope
COLUMBIA 4953462

For the band's second album, in came Blue Öyster Cult producer Sandy Pearlman to try to turn The Clash into Americans. How well he succeeded in making The Clash contenders rather than, well, punks. Headon's drum rattle which kicks off both Safe European Home and the LP is a great moment in rock, and Tommy Gun is the apex of Strummer's soldier fantasies; Stay Free, a tribute to an old school chum, is the best love song Jones ever wrote, and All The Young Punks (New Boots & Contracts) was a tearful slab of self-mythologizing. ★★★
John Aizlewood

The Clash
The Singles
EPIC/LEGACY SNY 63886

Stocking the punk rock juke-box with this 18-track stack of The Clash's most famous won't win any cred points – they are, of course, the most album-worthy of the earlies and deserve at-length listens. (Every collection should include London Calling, Combat Rock and Sandinista!). So this sampler is for the marginally interested, collecting their biggest UK hits and the original, non-dub version of Bankrobber, which is on other, multi-disc retrospectives. Singles only essential for those who think punk isn't. ★★★
Daphne Carr

Elvis Costello & The Attractions
This Year's Model
EDSEL RECORDS MANUS 102

Though never really punk, the self-styled "bug-eyed monster from planet Guilt and Revenge" certainly partook in its angry attitude. Pumped up by his band's favourite pastime, speed and vodka, Costello's album is a stinging slap in the face, pouring bile on lovers, fashion models and – years ahead of No Logo – faceless corporations. Punk was on its last legs by This Year's Model release, but with Costello established as Britain's leading young songwriter, its anger, at least, would simmer on. ★★★
Paul Stokes

Extras: Bonus disc with 12 tracks, including Big Tears.

Wayne County
Rock'n'Roll Cleopatra
RPM 119

Wayne County was a transexual actor/singer who had hung out with Warhol's gang, but then decided that Britain would be more receptive to his/her brand of glam-punk. This excellent '77-'81 compilation showcases County's propensity for New York sleaze-rock, sexual polemics and intelligent borrowings from '50s/'60s rock: viz, the hilarious Ted-meets-punk romance, Eddie And Sheena, and the infamous Fuck Off – "If you don't wanna fuck me, baby/Baby fuck off". If you remember County simply as a novelty act, prepare to be surprised. ★★★
Joe Cushley

Boys will be boys: Dead Boys get snotty.

The Damned
Damned Damned Damned
EDSEL EDCD677

Famously the first British punk act to release a single – the Shangri-La's-indebted New Rose – The Damned consisted of Croydon's only Stooges obsessive, an anaemic gravedigger, a goofy toilet cleaner and a drummer nicknamed Rat. Yet, on their Nick Lowe-produced debut, they forged one of the nastiest, most ragged and downright funniest records of the era. Jefferson Airplane covers and Top Of The Pops were to follow, but The Damned never bettered the likes of Neat Neat Neat. ★★★★
Pat Long

The Damned
Music For Pleasure
DEMON FIENDCD 108

One of the few punk bands to be unabashed about their '60s influences, The Damned pitched for Syd Barrett to produce their second album. While their compromise – Barrett's former Floyd cohort, Nick Mason – was hardly a meeting of minds, Music For Pleasure isn't quite the disaster it's often dismissed as. Its psychedelic elements have worn better than many of its year zero contemporaries while Problem Child and Idiot Box were as good as anything on their debut. Drummer Rat Scabies would quit soon after and a disastrous year was rounded off when Stiff dropped the band. ★★
Toby Manning

The Damned
Live Shepperton 1980
BIG BEAT CDWIKM27

Recorded at a special gig for their fan club, this captures the Vanian/Sensible/Scabies/Paul Gray (ex Eddie And The Hot Rods) line-up tearing through the highlights of their then current Machine Gun Etiquette LP, early singles New Rose and Neat, Neat, Neat and their unique take on The Beatles' Help. Respite from the adrenalin overload is given by the raw psychedelia of Plan 9 Channel 7 but elsewhere what little subtlety the band might have possessed in the studio is thrown aside in the pursuit of mayhem and speed. ★★★★
Jon Harrington

Dead Boys
Young, Loud And Snotty
SIRE 26981

Notorious for weasel-faced Iggy acolyte Stiv Bator's habit of jerking off in the chilli in the kitchens of New York punk cradle CBGB's, Cleveland's Dead Boys were the provincial answer to the questions their cool Manhattan peers never dared ask. Containing the sublime Sonic Reducer (penned by Pere Ubu's David Thomas), a cover of '60s garage standard Little Girl and the truly moronic AC/DC steal Caught With The Meat In Your Mouth amid a raft of rock'n'roll indebted scuzz, this was their moment. ★★★
Pat Long

Dead Kennedys
Fresh Fruit For Rotting Vegetables
CHERRY RED CDSBRED 155

One of the most fiery, politically explosive diatribes you are ever likely to hear. Front man Jello Biafra's vitriolic, merciless, near-hysterical verbal lambasting is set to a soundscape of ferocious, high velocity punk courtesy of guitarist East Bay Ray, bassist Klaus Fluoride and sticksman Bruce Slesinger aka Ted. Their debut single, California Uber Alles, is a vicious attack on the Californian governor Jerry Brown, while its follow-up, Holiday In Cambodia, is a cutting parody of student chic and US foreign policy. Elsewhere Biafra covers Elvis (Viva Las Vegas) and targets the housing law (Let's Lynch The Landlord). ★★★★
Lois Wilson

Extras: Limited edition bonus CD featuring all the early singles.

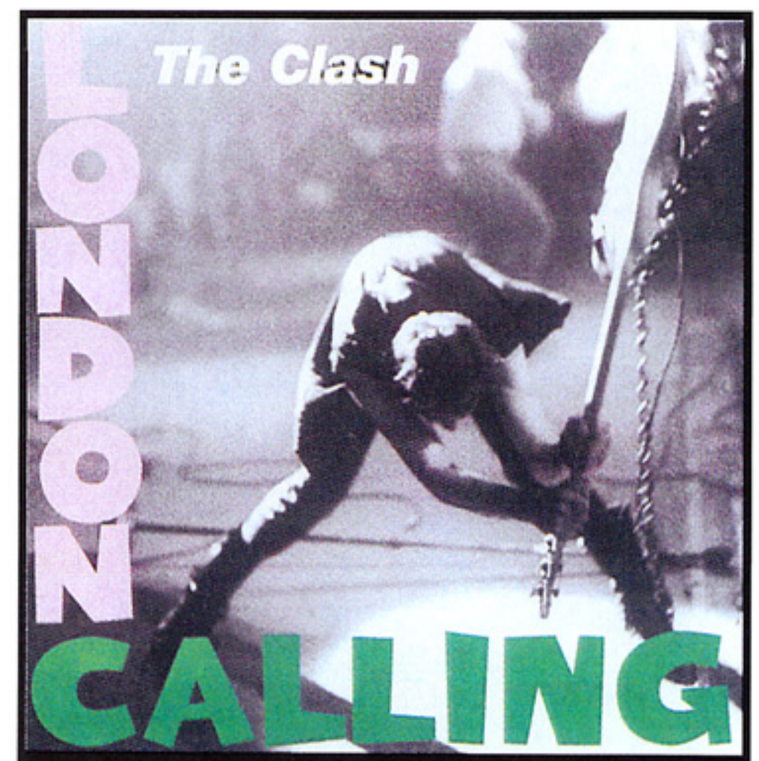
The Dickies
The Incredible Shrinking Dickies
CAPTAIN OI! AHOY CD149

Released two years after the LA band's formation, The Incredible Shrinking Dickies became a template for the Californian punk ethic – sunshine ditties played at breakneck pace by cartoon comrades. The Dickies were massively influenced by the Ramones and The Damned, and were characterised by goofball cuts such as, Mental Ward, Walk Like An Egg and the insane instrumental Rondo (The Midget's Revenge). However, more famously there lurked ridiculous three-chord punk versions of Black Sabbath's Paranoid and Barry Ryan's Eve Of Destruction. Issued in Day-Glo vinyl variations, it ensured a five-month stay in the UK charts for this colourful quintet. ★★★
Jo Kendall

Extras: Six bonus tracks.

The Drones
Further Temptation
ANAGRAM CDPUNK 020

Starting life as pub band Rockslide, The Drones are the forgotten group of Manchester's vibrant punk scene, despite achieving a huge following in the city. Following the issue of Further Temptation in 1977, the band disappeared for 20 years, but the album demonstrates their deft – if unoriginal – ability with amphetamine-charged Ramones-style riffs, shout-along choruses and suitably alienated lyrics on tracks like the single Bone Idol and Persecution Complex. Bracing, if unremarkable, Further Temptation nevertheless evokes a particularly fraught night down the Manc punk



CHECK THIS OUT

The Clash
London Calling
COLUMBIA 4953472

The best album ever made? Quite possibly. This 19-track cornucopia – varied in everything save its unrelenting quality – was where The Clash became the best rock'n'roll band on the planet. United still by a revolutionary punk aesthetic, the LP served up rock (the post-apocalyptic title track: "the wheat is growing thin"); Mick Jones-style pop (Train In Vain, the song that cracked America for them), reggae (Simonon's thunderous Guns Of Brixton); high-falutin', self-mythology (Four Horsemen: "four horsemen and it's gonna be... [dramatic pause]... US!!!", as if it were going to be Sham 69...) and there were history lessons (the fearful Spanish Bombs). What there was not, however, was punk. ★★★★★
John Aizlewood

gig The Electric Circus. ★★★
Martin O'Gorman
Extras: *Includes seven extra tracks.*

Ian Dury And The Blockheads
New Boots And Panties!!
THE HIT LABEL/PAPILLON AHLCD 57

Pub-rocker and art lecturer Dury had done time with the splendid Kilburn & The High Roads before linking up with co-writer Chaz Jankel and some sympathetic sessioneers who would become The Blockheads. Together they created this masterpiece – an enthralling collage of punk-poetics, funk and rock'n'roll. Sweet Gene Vincent is the best tribute song ever, My Old Man is a moving ode to his father, while Clevor Trever (sic) and Billericay Dickie are ambiguous, quick-witted dissections of Essex manhood. A perfect memorial to the Dr Johnson of the Dr Marten. ★★★★
Joe Cushley
Extras: *Five tracks.*

Eater
The Compleat Eater
ANAGRAM CD PUNK10

Eater were there from the beginning. One of the first wave of UK punk groups, their claim to fame was their tender age. Second drummer Dee Generate was said to be a mere 13 years old when he joined the band in 1976, while singer Andy Blade was a veritable old hand – on this collection of Eater's singles and their one album he reworks Alice Cooper's I'm Eighteen as Fifteen. Although the end result sometimes is proof that age (or lack of it) is not necessarily a substitute for talent, covers of Lou Reed (Waiting For The Man, Sweet Jane), David Bowie (Queen Bitch) and Marc Bolan (Jeepster) are a good indication of the influences behind these particular young punks. ★★★
Nathaniel Cramp

Eddie And The Hotrods: getting their Teenage kicks.

Eddie And The Hot Rods
Teenage Depression
CAPTAIN OI! AHOY CD 132

As the most prehensile of the pub rock bands, Canvey Island's finest were the most readily embraced by punk. Following its title track's moderate chart success, their debut album revealed them as a British Back In The USA-era MC5, all raging hormones and adolescent abandon (bassist Paul Gray was only 16!) trapped in a tearaway, treble-heavy clatter. With rip-snorting covers of Sam Cooke's Shake and The Who's The Kids Are Alright suiting Barrie Master's hoarse, urgent vocals as perfectly as Higgs' rampant teenage anthems,

you can practically smell the pheromones. ★★★
Toby Manning
Extras: *12 tracks.*

single Agitated manage the neat trick of alloying elements of free-jazz and frat-punk skronking. ★★★
Pat Long

The Fall
Live At The Witch Trials
COG SINISTER COGVP 103CD

The Fall's astonishing debut album was removed from standard punker values. But, then again, it was removed from most things. You could argue that The Fall's splenetic riffs echoed punk's disdain for proficiency, but Mark E Smith drew more explicitly on Krautrock and rockabilly. These songs about junkies, paranoia and time travel railed at any kind of consensus, particularly one based on liberal idealism ("Non-sympathetic to spastics," proclaimed the title track). It was a theme reiterated on Crap Rap 2/Like To Blow: "We are the Fall/Northern white crap that talks back... No boxes for us..." ★★★
Roy Wilkinson

CHECK THIS OUT

The Damned
Machine Gun Etiquette
CHISWICK CDWIK 905

"We're really famous stinking rich/Straight up there without a hitch." So boasts the adrenalin-fuelled title track to this, The Damned's third LP. Having reformed in early '79 minus principal songwriter/guitarist Brian James, few would have predicted such a spectacular comeback. With Captain Sensible switching to guitar and new member Algy Ward of The Saints providing the thundering basslines, the revamped Damned delivered such visceral delights as the supercharged Love Song (their first Top 20 hit), the pantomime punk anthem Smash It Up, the proto goth of I Just Can't Be Happy Today, and Plan 9 Channel 7, their magnificent sci-fi prog opus. ★★★★
Jon Harrington
Extras: *Four bonus tracks.*

The Electric Eels
The Eyeball Of Hell
SCAT 62CD

Unlike the Rocket From The Tombs/Pere Ubu/Dead Boys axis, The Electric Eels never made it out of rainy industrial Cleveland, but their music is no less thrilling. The Eels boasted a set-closer entitled God Says Fuck You – which is sadly not collected on this career-spanning rag bag of singles, rehearsal tapes and demos, but the deeply sociopathic likes of You're Full Of Shit and gloriously primitive debut

PHOTOS: HARRY GOODWIN

The Flys
Waikiki Beach Refugees
CAPTAIN OI! AHOY CD 182

After launching their major-label career with the irresistible 45 Love And A Molotov Cocktail, Coventry's Flys struggled to settle on a clear musical identity. Centred around songwriters Neil O'Connor and David Freeman, the group quickly developed into a smart, if somewhat anonymous, source of quality singles – notably the lively Virginia Plain knock-off Fun City, and the deliciously camp Name Dropping. All the aforementioned are included as extra cuts on this reissue, giving much needed weight to an album that was underwhelming on release, and which still sounds faint-hearted today. A more adventurous synthesizer-based album, Own, followed in 1979. ★★
Matthew Lees

Extras: *Eight non-LP tracks from the band's inspired singles run.*

Gang Of Four
Entertainment
INFINITE ZERO 43047

Along with Factory Records' sleeve designer Peter Saville, Leeds post-punkers Gang Of Four took up with modernism and futurism some 40 years after they had ceased to be that

modern or futuristic. But if modernism's anti-classicist impulse was old hat in literature, this debut showed that in rock it could still be a brash, thrilling thing. This was there in Andy Gill's sheet-metal guitar, a style that would later influence Peter Buck and Steve Albini. As illustrated by Guns Before Butter, Gang Of Four's other defining item were lyrics seemingly taken from some 1930s anti-fascist pamphlet.
★★★★★
Roy Wilkinson

Extras: *Four bonus tracks.*

Generation X
Perfect Hits 1975-1981
CHRYSALIS CCD 1854

Fairly comprehensive but by no means perfect as the title suggests – this greatest hits, of sorts, originally released in 1991, gathers together Billy Idol's finest moments as Generation X's frontman. While the 15 tracks, a seemingly random selection of singles, B-sides, album cuts and unreleased material, pay no attention to chronology or chart success, they do reveal Generation X's knack for coupling infectious teen chants with super catchy pop tunes. Includes their tremendous, rousing first three singles Your Generation, Wild Youth and Ready Steady Go plus their biggest hit King Rocker, and the superb Dancing With Myself, later to be covered by a solo Idol. ★★★
Lois Wilson

Vic Godard And The Subway Sect
20 Odd Years
MOTION PACECD10

This excellent 44-track, double CD Best Of covers the Subway Sect recordings from 1976-1982, taking in all their various line-ups, plus Godard's Edwyn Collins-produced solo material from the '90s and his collaborations with the Black Arabs. Of particular interest to the Godard connoisseur, however, is the inclusion of seven tracks originally recorded in 1978 with third drummer Bob Ward at Gooseberry Studios in Gerrard Street, London, for their intended but never released debut album. Plus We Oppose All Rock'n'Roll/ Sister Ray, recorded live at the band's California Ballroom, Dunstable gig with The Slits. ★★★★
Lois Wilson

Richard Hell & The Voidoids
Blank Generation
WARNER 7599261372

Co-founder of Television and latterly of The Heartbreakers, Richard Hell was central to New York punk. Moreover, his razored hair and distressed apparel inspired Malcolm McLaren to fashion the Sex Pistols in his image. Recruiting guitarists Robert Quine and Ivan Julien, and drummer Marc Bell, Hell set about reworking Television-style dual guitars and poetic lyrics to his own ends. The Voidoids' debut revolved around the anthemic title track's nihilism – though Hell insisted he meant the 'blank' to be "an empty canvass". All the same, the album fitted punk's fidgety, wired aesthetic like a glove – propelled by Quine's volatile guitar playing and Hell's deranged delivery. ★★★★
David Sheppard

Extras: *Two album out-takes.*

The Jam
In The City
POLYDOR 5374172

They came from Woking, clad in cheap Carnaby Street suits, with well-thumbed copies of Absolute Beginners under their arms. Their debut album – recorded in 11 days – mixed dog-eared R&B covers and suburban ennui, spawning the title track hit and a UK tour in a Ford Cortina. Sure, his sidekicks might've had their limitations, and the trio improved exponentially with each subsequent album, but mod-poet Paul Weller knew how it felt to be young, brash and alive. Rarely have those emotions been better captured on record. ★★★★
Pat Long

The Jolt
The Jolt
CAPTAIN MOD: MODSKA21

The Jam were the most obvious of the mod generation born from punk, but there were others too, bands who found in the musical revolution of 1976 the initial inspiration to pick up a guitar and play. Foremost among these were Scotland's leading punk band, The Jolt. Signed to Polydor amid the post-Jubilee scramble to sign anything in a leather jacket, The Jolt put pen to paper at the same time as Slaughter & The Dogs, New Hearts, The Cortinas and XTC, but on relocating from Glasgow to London, and playing support to The Jam, they soon found that dressing their harsh punk R&B sound in a three-button suit jacket, gave a more definite outline for their style. ★★★
Chris Hunt

Extras: *Seven tracks including all pre & post album 45s.*

DJ Don Letts
Dread Meets The Punk Rockers Uptown
HEAVENLY HVNCD 33

"There aren't any punk records to play, so what's Don Lett's going to do," cried the Acme Attractions shop assistant and DJ when asked to spin records at London's legendary punk club, The Roxy. Falling back on his reggae collection, he not only packed out the dancefloor but also introduced a new dimension to punk music itself – it was he who first played Junior Murvin's Police And Thieves to The Clash, which they then covered on their debut LP. Here we have 16 of the choicest cuts culled from his mid-'70s set list including the beautiful harmonies of The Congos' Fisherman and Culture's Two Sevens Clash. ★★★★
Lois Wilson

The Lurkers
Fulham Fallout
CAPTAIN OI! AHOY CD 73

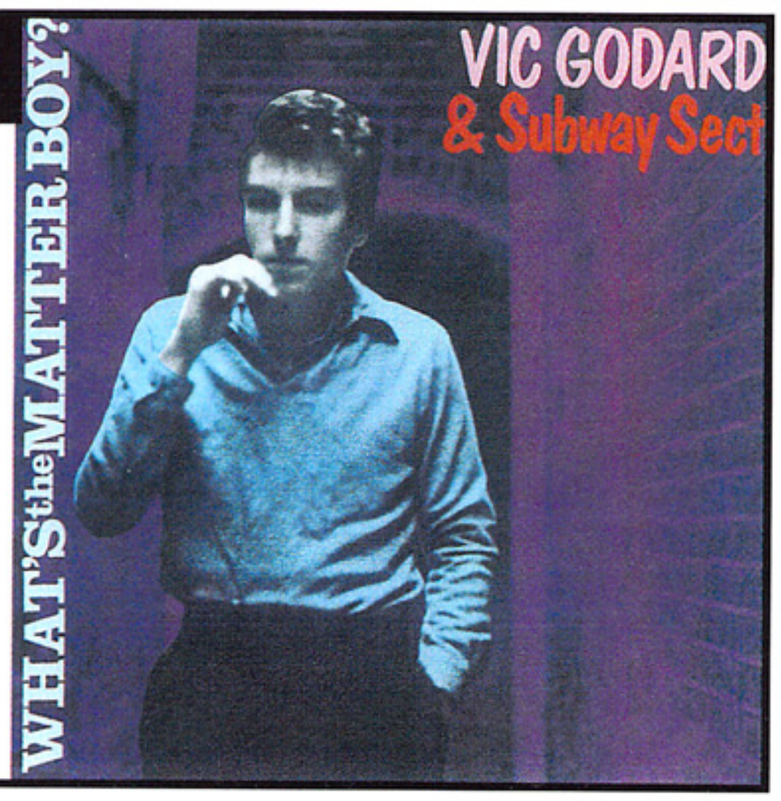
Four working-class lads from Ickenham with a solid live following, The Lurkers

CHECK THIS OUT

Vic Godard & Subway Sect
What's The Matter Boy?
UNIVERSAL 8449732CD

First time round manager Bernie Rhodes had the not-so-brilliant idea of speeding up the mastertapes so that What's The Matter Boy? would sound more punk rock. This time round the album was restored to its original glory. Pre-empting the likes of Everything But The Girl, Massive Attack and Portishead, Godard's experiments with an exceptional mélange of coffee-table jazz, bittersweet pop and melodic swing. Bonus tracks include their 1978 Peel session, a scherzo reworking of The Velvet Underground's Held Held High and the superb single Stop That Girl – an accordion-driven tale of boy losing girl to lesbian love. ★★★★
Lois Wilson

Extras: *Four Peel Sessions tracks.*



were never among the most fashionable of the British punk groups. However, their Ramones-inspired speed and simplicity (with a healthy dash of the Stones and The Faces) makes this, their debut from 1978, something of a lost classic. Including the singles Shadow and I Don't Need To Tell Her, alongside versions of the '50s rockabilly rave-up Go Go Go and Greenwich & Barry's Then I Kissed Her, humorously retitled Then I Kicked Her. ★★★
Nathaniel Cramp

Extras: *12 bonus tracks including singles, B-sides and demo versions.*

The Lurkers
The Punk Singles Collection
CAPTAIN OI! AHOY CD 188

If your original coloured vinyl seven-inches are worn out, then this CD conveniently collects together all the A and B-sides of The Lurkers' classic run of Beggars Banquet singles, from the brilliantly amateurish Shadow (the label's first ever release) to the should've-been-a-classic New Guitar In Town (later covered by German punks Die Toten Hosen). This compilation also includes all of their early-'80s Clay singles and brings us almost up to date with Go Ahead Punk Make My Day (that's what Dirty Harry used to say) – an obscure shoutalong classic from 1999, with original bassist Arturo Bassick fronting the latest Lurkers incarnation. ★★★
Nathaniel Cramp

PHOTO: RAY STEVENSON

The Members
Sound Of The Suburbs: A Collection Of The Members' Finest Moments
VIRGIN, CDOVD455

The Members were latecomers to the punk scene and often did their best to distance themselves from it. Fronted by the enigmatic Nick Tesco, they boasted reggae influences not dissimilar to The Ruts, but will always be remembered for their sole Top 20 hit, the classic Sound Of The Suburbs. This album shows that they were certainly more than one-trick ponies, collecting together the aforementioned hit single with 18 other almost-classics such as Solitary Confinement, Offshore Banking Business and cuts from their two Virgin albums, Live At The Chelsea Nightclub and 1980's The Choice Is Yours. ★★★
Nathaniel Cramp

New York Dolls
Too Much Too Soon
MERCURY 8342302CD

Produced by Shadow Morton (the man behind the sound of the Shangri-La's), the presciently titled second New York Dolls album was a glorious disaster. Morton singularly failed to understand the garish magnificence of the band's teetering-on-the-brink-of-implosion aesthetic, crow-barring female backing singers onto the bands messed-up stew of careening guitars and indolent vocals in an attempt to make them more accessible. The incongruous additions only served to make it stranger – rendering tracks like the bluesy It's Too Late and preening Puss'N'Boots as surreally dangerous as anything by Lou Reed or David Bowie. ★★★
David Sheppard

999
The Punk Singles – 1977-1980
CAPTAIN OI! AHOY CD 176

Keith Lucas served his apprenticeship with Ian Dury's Kilburn & The High Roads before becoming Nick Cash and forming 999. Their early career was marked by a string of strong singles – the punk-Monkees power-pop of I'm Alive; the quirky, Buzzcock-esque melodics of Emergency; the Lennon-esque vocals and Rolling Stonesy backing of Me And My Desire; and the throbbing, edgy R&B of their minor hit, Homicide. Cash was an excellent songwriter, whose band consistently played with vim and good technique. Although perhaps a mid-table new wave outfit, 999 were always capable of springing a few surprises. ★★★
Joe Cushley

The Only Ones
The Only Ones
COLUMBIA 4773792

Peter Perrett can go to his rest safe in the knowledge that he wrote one of *the* great new wave songs. Another Girl, Another Planet, replete with Perrett's yearning but cynical, Lou- Reed-on-Thames delivery and John Perry's spiralling guitar solo displays power-pop nous in spades. The rest of this 1978 debut isn't at all bad either – Perrett had surrounded himself with seasoned pros, including Spooky Tooth's drummer – but his acerbic tales of love gone stale and off-kilter melodics never quite grabbed the punk public's attention in the way they should have done. Shame. ★★★
Joe Cushley

Penetration
Moving Targets
VIRGIN CDV 2109

Inspired by the Sex Pistols, Northumberland's Penetration were built around kohl-eyed front-woman Pauline Murray, proffering a poppier alternative to Siouxsie & The Banshees' punk noir. Their singles were all febrile anthems, but by 1978 they'd faltered slightly, undecided whether to pursue raging garage punk or more agile rock. At its best – the disarming Life's A Gamble – they were still capable of Buzzcockian euphony – though Murray's crystalline voice occasionally bordered on the insufferably shrill. A lowering cover of Patti Smith's Fee Money proved their aim was still high, even if the track itself, like much of Moving Targets, now sounds a little tame.
★★★
David Sheppard

Extras: *Five earlier singles.*

CHECK THIS OUT

New York Dolls
New York Dolls
MERCURY 8327522CD

The New York Dolls pillaged early rock'n'roll, doo-wop and more, spat glittery indolence over them and flounced into the face of all that was sacrosanct in early-'70s American rock. Their debut was brief, attitudinal and packed with Phil Spector-meets-Detroit rock mini-anthems like Trash and Looking For A Kiss, with singer David Johansen oozing Jagger-esque lubricity, while Johnny Thunders' sub-Chuck Berry riffs churned and Jerry Nolan's jungle backbeat pounded. Todd Rundgren's meek production captured only an iota of the band's juggernaut live sound, but in its primitive swagger, the New York Dolls was a lurid clarion call to the musically disaffected. ★★★★★
David Sheppard

The Pop Rivets
The Pop Rivets
HANGMAN RECORDS HANG-27 UP

Recording their eponymous debut and sole LP in 1979 with a £300 bank loan, painter, poet, novelist, guitarist, songwriter, founding member of the Stuckists and all-round Renaissance man, Steven John Hamper, aka Billy Childish's first band mixed silly lyrics with musical ineptitude and a love of The Clash's first LP. With guitarist Will Power, alias Bruce Brand, bassist Big Russ and drummer Little Russ, he delivered tongue-in-cheek odes to the Sex Pistols (Fun In The UK), scooters (LambrettaVespaScooter) and the Fab Four (Beatle Boots), lampooned disco (Disco Fever) and inspired everyone from Kurt Cobain and Tracey Emin to Rocket From The Crypt, The Hives and The White Stripes.
★★★
Lois Wilson

Professionals
I Didn't See It Coming
EMI 5335882

After Johnny had quit and Sid finally checked out, what was a Pistol left to do when the nights in Rio with Ronnie Biggs had run their course? Cook and Jones had already fired their warning shots at the fag end of the Pistols with cuts like Silly Thing, Black Leather and Lonely Boy, and it's this same wall-of-guitars rock sound that proved to be the pattern from which the sound of their new band was fashioned. The Professionals only released this one album and a clutch of singles before Steve Jones tired of hearing the sound of his own voice. ★★★★

Chris Hunt

Extras: *Eight bonus tracks.*

The Radiators
Cockles And Mussels
CHISWICK CDWIKD156

The Radiators From Space were among Ireland's first punk exports, although like many of their contemporaries, their seamless transformation into fine exponents of new wave pop was not always to the tastes of their hardcore audience. The signs were there, though. Early recordings like Television Screen, Sunday World and Enemies might have rocked at 100mph with punk verve, but an edgy populist hook could always be found lurking beneath the abrasive vocal stance. Shortening their name to The Radiators, they went on to make some fine new wave pop – all captured on this compilation – but after just two LPs, The Radiators waved goodbye. ★★★

Chris Hunt

Ramones
Ramones
WARNER ARCHIVES 8122 743062

"Hey ho let's go!" The generational battle cry of four lanky leather and denim-clad outcasts and the intro to their debut LP's opening track Blitzkrieg Bop, a manifesto for independent thinking, which along with the album's other 13 tracks – including Beat On The Brat, Judy Is A Punk and Now I Wanna Sniff Some Glue – prototyped punk a whole year before their UK rivals. Clocking in at a mere 28 minutes and 53 seconds, Ramones is ridiculously fast, juvenile, silly and, on top of that, acutely amateurish in its musicianship and lyrical content, which, of course, makes it utterly fabulous and a definite must. ★★★★

Lois Wilson

Extras: *Seven demo tracks.*

CHECK THIS OUT

The Saints
(I'm) Stranded
CAPTAIN OI! AHOYCD129

In Britain, The Saints' debut album was heralded by the single of the same name. The music weekly Sounds was so impressed with it they made it 'Single Of This And Every Week', before advising how you could purchase it by mail order for "90p for the first one and 60p for each additional copy". In keeping with such minimalist pricing, the album was a startlingly stripped-down mix of terse, careening guitar and vocals that replaced Joey Ramone's sense of punk kitsch with a more inscrutable brand of sneer. The implicit intelligence suggested that this lot hadn't availed themselves of the Ramones' Teenage Lobotomy. ★★★★

Roy Wilkinson

Extras: *Two bonus tracks.*

Ramones
Rocket To Russia
WARNER ARCHIVES 8122743092

After their fine, if ever so slightly disappointing second LP, Leave Home, everything came together on the band's über-album, Rocket To Russia. "Everyone worked as a unit. We knew what we were doing by then." Is there a better first side in the entire rock canon? The glorious inanity of Cretin Hop; Rockaway Beach – "Chewing out a rhythm on my bubble gum..."; the prickly beauty of ballad, Here Today, Gone Tomorrow; the celebratory garage-band thrash of Sheena Is A Punk Rocker. Rough-cut gems, every one of 'em. ★★★★

Joe Cushley

Extras: *Five bonus tracks plus early demos.*

Ramones
It's Alive
SIRE 9362460452

This double live LP was recorded at a New Year's Eve, 1977 gig at London's Rainbow Theatre, and is perhaps one of the half dozen best live albums in rock history. From the first pounding beats of Rockaway Beach to the final rasped "Good night!" after We're A Happy Family, this is a superb document of the band in their natural habitat: Joey's heron-like frame attacking the mic; Johnny's buzz-saw Mosrite guitar slung impossibly low; Tommy, king of the frantic 4/4; and bassman Dee Dee pogoing like a new wave St Vitus. Altogether now – Gabba gabba, hey! ★★★★

Joe Cushley

Ramones
Hey Ho Let's Go! Ramones Anthology
WARNER BROTHERS 8122-73557-2

This 57-track, 2CD anthology compiles the best of the band's studio output from their 30-year career with only 1994's Acid Eaters covers album not represented. CD1 spans 1976-80 and is fantastic throughout, ranging from the sturm und drang of Blitzkrieg Bop to the Phil Spector produced cover of The Ronettes' Baby I Love You. CD2 mops up the remaining years which saw the group increasingly regarded as an anachronism but still able to pen classics like third drummer Richie's rocking Somebody Put Something In My Drink or Joey's She Talks To Rainbows. ★★★

Jon Harrington

"We're going down the pub!" The audience feel Jimmy Pursey's pain.

Rocket From The Tombs
The Day The Earth Met The...
GLITTERHOUSE 75492

Featuring a pre-Pere Ubu David Thomas as well as future members of the Dead Boys, Rocket From The Tombs are only now being hailed as punk forefathers. Bridging the gap between The Stooges' metallic KO and the nihilism of some of the CBGB's mob, The Day The Earth Met The... is comprised of equal halves live show and rehearsal tape, with the band toughening up Satisfaction and the Velvet's Foggy Notion with a vicious sense of abandon. ★★★

Pat Long

The Ruts
The Crack
VIRGIN CDV 2132

The Ruts were princes among second-wave punkers. Several disparate elements collide in their unique, and influential sound: singer Malcolm Owen was a former mod and yet his singing voice recalls rocker, Phil Lynott; and the group also loved reggae – viz, the regal Jah War. The complex fury of Something That I Said evinces a Who fixation, while the urgent build of Babylon's Burning makes for a genre classic. Paul Fox's molten guitar, and the tight but flexible rhythm section, are massively impressive throughout. ★★★★

Joe Cushley

Extras: *Three B-sides.*

The Ruts
Something That I Said, The Best Of The Ruts
VIRGIN CHOICE CUTS CDOVD 454

The Ruts were anything but three chord wonders. Consummate musicians, their members, following the untimely and tragic death of singer Malcolm Owen, went on to become respected session players. This superb compilation gathers together the highlights from their 1980 debut LP The Crack with tracks like the magnificent Babylon's Burning and Something That I Said. Adeptly blending punk, pop and reggae, they gave The Clash a good run for their money on their reggae-tinged Jah War while live track, Human Punk, is aggressive and chaotic and H Eyes, a piercing slab of biting social commentary, a real killer. ★★★

Louisa Carr

The Ruts
The Crack
VIRGIN CDV 2132

The Ruts were princes

The Saints
Eternally Yours
CAPTAIN OI! AHOY CD127

After LP (I'm) Stranded, The

PHOTO: BARRY PLUMMER

Covers band: The Ruts.

Saints relocated from Brisbane to sunny London where they drew together gritty new elements and new members to make Eternally Yours. Snotty cynicism remained intact on Private Affair, and the classic singles Know Your Product and This Perfect Day, but this second album also surprisingly incorporated horns, rhythm and a hefty dose of more reflective acoustic material, setting them on a less punk course in their future career. God forbid, they even sounded like they were having fun on International Robots, but this was, as always, served up with a sneer. ★★★★
Jo Kendall

Extras: *This Perfect Day single version plus B-sides L.I.E.S and Do The Robot.*

Sex Pistols
Kiss This
VIRGIN VJCP 68053

Another decade, another Sex Pistols compilation. Issued 25 years after the release of Never Mind The Bollocks, Virgin's 1992 collection included all of the Pistols' only album, a few early Dave Goodman productions (Don't Give Me No Lip Child, Stepping Stone) and a smattering of tracks from the post-Lydon fallout. Most entertaining are the band's sleevenotes – Lydon even claims to like Silly Thing at one point – and in an ironic turn, with the Virgin label changing hands, the Sex Pistols again ended up on EMI. Ever had the feeling you've been cheated? ★★
Martin O'Gorman

Extras: *Initial copies came with an extra CD – Live In Trondheim, 21 July 1977.*

Sham 69
Tell Us The Truth
SANCTUARY CMRCD 020

A prime slice of raw power punk pop. Partially recorded live at the Marquee, with Pursey's finely honed homespun wisdom and Parson's controlled Townshend-esque fury at the fore. The pure adrenalin buzz of Borstal Breakout is still hard to beat, though the bracing agit-pop and sing-a-long sass of George Davis Is Innocent (OK) and Hey Little Rich Boy both run it close and were a portent of things to come. Trivia fans should look out for the voice of Wendy Richards playing Jimmy's admonishing mum at the start of Family Life. ★★★
Andy Cowan

Sham 69
That's Life
SANCTUARY CMRCD 127

Punk's first concept album, if you will, and unheralded Parklife precursor. It found Sham developing their quintessential Englishness with a 12-song cycle detailing the minutiae of a mad 24 hours involving sleeping in, getting sacked, winning at the dogs, getting blathered and picking up birds in reggae bars. Hits like Angels With Dirty Faces and misunderstood knees-up Hurry Up Harry make perfect sense amid the rough and tumble kitchen sink dialogue that spliced it together. Oh yeah, and Pauline Quirke steps into the fluffy slippers of Jimmy's mater too. ★★★
Andy Cowan

Extras: *Two bonus B-sides.*

Sham 69
Angels With Dirty Faces
SANCTUARY ESDCD 780

All bases covered compilation of the Cockney cowboy's classics, plus album cuts, B-sides and more. Low on frills, high on thrills, this is worth it alone for the first blood of I Don't Wanna and rabble rousing Top 10 hit If The Kids Are United – both previously omitted from the album release. The early gems shine the strongest and while later cuts like Questions And Answers and The Game show great leaps musically, the lyrical spark that was half the original attraction had become blunted and opaque. ★★★
Andy Cowan

The Skids
Days In Europa
CAPTAIN OI! AHOY CD 172

Initially drawing controversy for the supposed Aryan overtones of its sleeve art, The Skids' second album was quickly withdrawn and reissued with a new sleeve. Produced by Bill Nelson of Be-Bop Deluxe, Days In Europa saw the group's anthemic punk-pop sound tempered with new wave keys and Richard 'Jobbo' Jobson's grandiose pretensions. While the singles: Animation, Charade and Working For The Yankee Dollar, showed they could still pen a winner or three, this change of course was apparently too much for the rhythm section, who soon left Jobson and guitarist/songwriter Stuart Adamson to soldier on alone. ★★★
Andrew Carden

Extras: *Seven bonus tracks.*

CHECK THIS OUT

Sex Pistols
Never Mind The Bollocks
VIRGIN, CDVX2086

There have been more shocking albums than Never Mind The Bollocks. There have certainly been more innovative albums. Few have matched, however, this record's exhilarating and unrelenting fury. This was Johnny Rotten's state-of-the-nation address – a raging and blackly comic assault on the old order driven home by Steve Jones's brutal riffs. True, the likes of God Save The Queen and Bodies may have lost some of their illicit thrill since 1977. But in a year which has seen a police. chief preach the joys of anarchy and the Golden Jubilee dying on its feet, this album still has the power to startle. ★★★★★
Martin Boon

Siouxsie And The Banshees
The Scream
POLYGRAM 8390082

Though the erstwhile Susan Ballion and cohorts made their debut at the 100 Club Punk Festival in 1976 and subsequently garnered a feverish following, Siouxsie And The Banshees were late putting their songs on to record. By early 1978 the band, Steve Severin on bass, John McKay on guitar and Kenny Morris on drums, had evolved a brooding update on punk's default buzzsaw sound. Though the dystopian portraits of urban decay that pepper their debut continued to mine the punk zeitgeist, the band's sophistication was light years beyond Sham 69 and their ilk, while Siouxsie's unique whelp of a voice launched a thousand imitators. ★★★
David Sheppard

Slaughter & The Dogs

The Punk Singles Collection

CAPTAIN OI! AHOY CD 154

Cranked Up Really High, their debut single – a raucous, amphetamine rush of a terrace chant, comprising equal parts glam and punk – failed to catapult the quartet to stardom but did win the working-class wannabe hooligans from the Wythenshawe estate in Manchester a recording contract with Decca. It also gave them a residency at punk mecca The Roxy, a bit-part in Don Lett's documentary on the punk scene and a cult boot boy following. This Best Of – gathering together all of the band's singles from 1977 to the present day – includes their spectacularly dumb covers of Quick Joey Small and You're Ready Now plus their self-penned anthem Where have All The Boot Boys Gone? Brilliant!
★★★★
Lois Wilson

Patti Smith

Horses

ARISTA 07822188272

Already a noted poetess, Patti Smith first set her stanzas to music with guitarist Lenny Kaye in the early '70s. By 1975 she was a regular at New York's CBGB's, her backing expanded to a scintillating quintet, playing stripped-down garage rock and emotionally charged jams over which Smith's Arthur Rimbaud-inspired lyrical flights could soar. Recorded by The Velvet Underground's John Cale, Horses captures both the band's urgent rawness and Smith's compelling vocals, with a decidedly un-1975 lack of ostentation. It was the first 'new underground' album to impact on the charts and its influence on punk's female fraternity was immeasurable. ★★★★★
David Sheppard

Extras: *One live track.*

The Starjets

God Bless The Starjets: The Punk Collection

CAPTAIN OI! AHOYCD99

At the pop end of punk's diverse spectrum, The Starjets charted just once (in 1979, peaking at Number 51) with the gloriously anthemic slice of new wave guitar pop, War Stories. They'd been plugging away in Belfast since mid-'76 and relocating to London helped their cause, being signed to Epic by Muff Winwood, but still The Starjets never bettered that minor chart placing.

Patti Smith: poetry in motion.

CHECK THIS OUT

The Slits

Cut

ISLAND IMCD275

The Slits exploded on to a male-dominated punk scene with a support slot on The Clash's 1977 White Riot tour. Their grand mission to rewrite rock's rigid, ultimately masculine rule book was achieved with their majestically awkward, dub-influenced Cut album. Their debut single, Typical Girls, set the agenda – call and response vocals fighting to be heard over sheet-metal drumming and jerky dissonance. A Number 30 hit, the band then disappeared sideways into wayward jamming, releasing just one more studio LP. Cut, however, retains all the cool insouciance of its sleeve (in which the band appear naked but for mud and loin cloth). ★★★★
Lois Wilson

Extras: *Two bonus tracks – a dub version of Love Und Romance and their cover of Marvin Gaye's Heard It Through The Grapevine.*

Having survived being called 'the Bay City Rollers of punk', they supported Stiff Little Fingers and the like, but while their LP weighed in as a fine new wave classic, all sharp guitars, pounding drums, great pop tunes and layered vocal harmonies, it just wasn't to be for The Starjets. God bless them though! ★★★
Chris Hunt

Extras: *10 bonus tracks.*

Stiff Little Fingers

Inflammable Material

EMI CATALOGUE 5358862

Referred to as "the Irish Clash", SLF made true combat rock as punk reporters in hellish '70s Belfast. From the first fire-branded line, '79's Inflammable Material is all anger, guitars and speed with street politics spat by the grisly Jake Burns. Every song's a gem, but on anthemic singles Suspect Device and the fanzine inspired Alternative Ulster, they summon the finest blend of bitterness and idealism towards their violence-ridden homeland. Nothing they've recorded since could touch this moment of inspired rage. ★★★★
Daphne Carr

Extras: *Three bonus tracks.*

Stiff Little Fingers

Anthology

EMI 5377562

They may have been latecomers to the scene but SLF were one of the most vital and exciting punk acts ever. Taking their moniker from a song on The Vibrators' debut LP, this fearsome four-piece started out as a covers band, but on co-writing their own material with manager Gordon Ogilvie, emerged as a politically fierce and explosively visceral musical force. This 55-track, three disc anthology contains every A and B-side including their supercharged anthems Suspect Device and Alternative Ulster, both diatribes directed at the quartet's divided home town of Belfast and both culled from the band's inaugural LP, Inflammable Material, the first independent album to reach the Top 20. ★★★
Lois Wilson

The Stranglers

IV Rattus Norvegicus

EMI 5344062

Musical proficiency was never in doubt here, for The Stranglers had honed their sound for the last three years on the live circuit. Organs swirl, basses growl and Cornwell plays the intelligent thug, as the sound of embittered pub rock/punk arrivistes is given commercial sheen by producer Martin Rushent. "I don't see that early Stranglers music was particularly ground-breaking," explains Cornwell, "but maybe that's why it was so successful. Golden Brown was more groundbreaking than anything we did in the year of punk!" ★★★
Ian Harrison

Extras: *Three bonus tracks.*

The Stranglers

No More Heroes

EMI 5344072

The title track – later lifted by Elastica for Getting Up – is possibly the group's finest moment, and the album is an enduring entertainment of melodic hardness and dark humour (see I Feel Like A Wog and Bring On The Nubiles, famously played live with strippers at a gig in Battersea Park). Burnel's "Barracuda" bass, Black's drumming and Greenfield's psyched-out keys well justified the brief tag 'The Punk Doors', and even more remarkably it was largely recorded during the same sessions as Rattus Norvegicus. See also the use of primitive synthesizers for the extent to which the group were prepared to buck the punk orthodoxies and win. ★★★
Ian Harrison

Extras: *Three bonus tracks.*

The Stranglers

The Gospel According To The Men In Black

EMI 7243 53469023

A critically savaged UFO conspiracy theory album was possibly not what the band's fans were expecting. But with unpredictable inspirations like Just Like Nothing On Earth and Waltzinblack – check those unorthodox time signatures and chipmunk vocals – this is Cornwell's choice as the group's best album. "That was our most creative time," he says. "We were pushing the boundaries of modern music. I'm very into psychedelic music and that album is very psychedelic." It was not commercially successful, and can well be seen as The Stranglers' own Kid A. ★★★
Ian Harrison

The Stranglers

Hits And Heroes

EMI 5232810

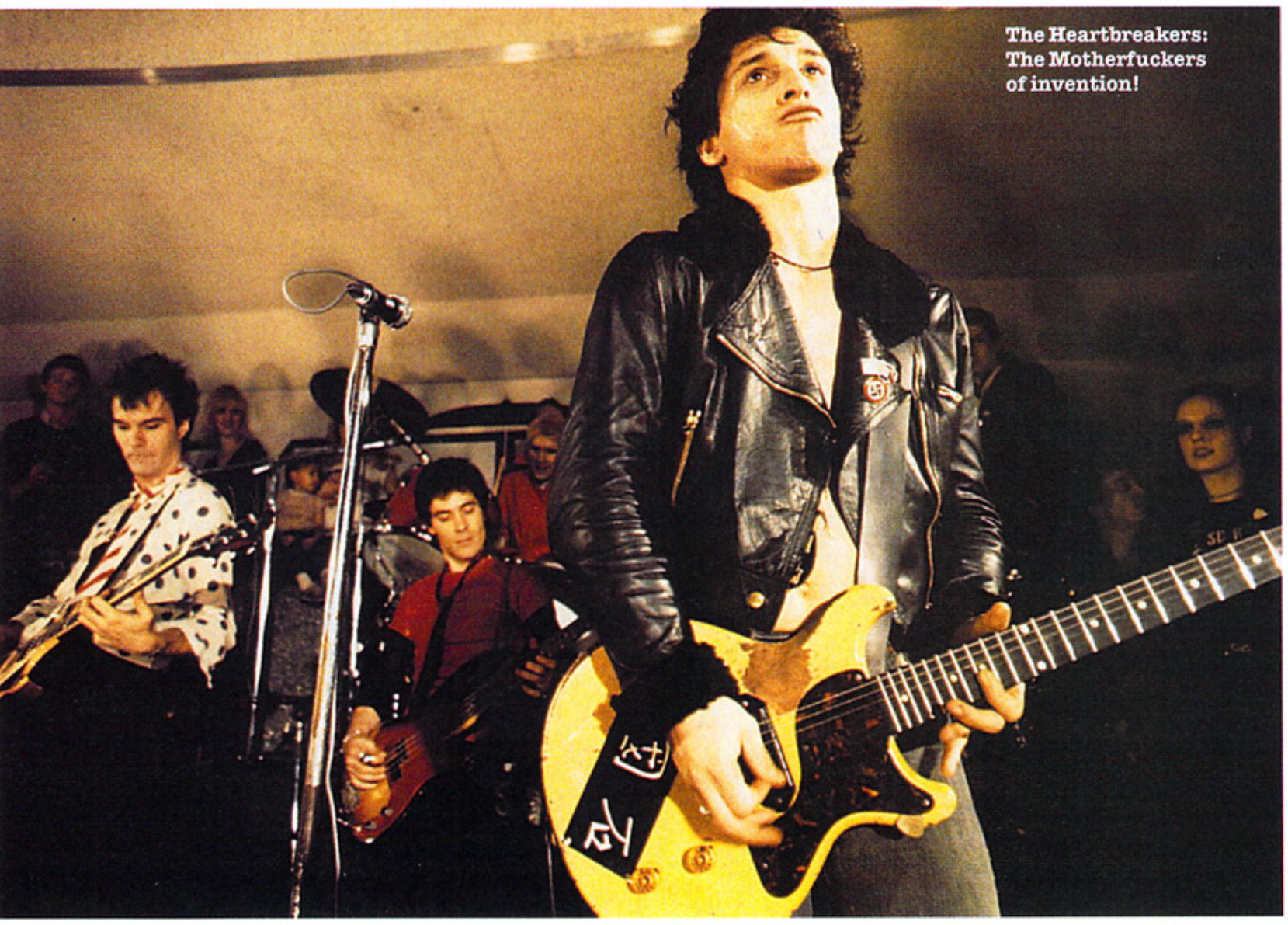
This double CD celebrates the bands 25th anniversary, and is a perfect slice of enduring, intelligent power pop. Spanning 1977 – 1982, CD 1 contains fabulous singles like Peaches and No More Heroes while CD 2 is an eclectic mix of rarities, radio edits, 12-inch remixes, B-sides plus a stray previously unreleased track. There are three CD Roms to watch including the promo to Duchess. While die-hard fans will only be interested in the rarities on offer, Hits And Heroes is a great starting point for the novice Stranglers fan and leaves you wondering why the band were never granted the same legendary status as some of their peers.
★★★
Louisa Carr

Suicide

Suicide

BLAST FIRST BFFP 133CD

They had the name, they had the 'tude. Gigs often



The Heartbreakers: The Motherfuckers of invention!

ended in violence, as at the Brussels date included here. The New York duo pumped out a brand of jittery, mesmeric electro-punk foreshadowed only by Silver Apples. Ghost Rider reinvents '50s rock'n'roll for a Bladerunner generation. Cheree is a techno Je T'aime; while Martin Rev's insistent, minimalist electronica backdrop, and Alan Vega's borderline psychotic delivery of Frankie Teardrop, make it one of the great street-art statements of the age. Started life in 1970. Haven't topped themselves yet. ★★★★
Joe Cushley

Extras: *Cheree single; live – CBGB's 1977 and 23 Minutes Over Brussels.*

Television

Marquee Moon

ELEKTRA 7559 606162

Here's the story; People's poet Richard Meyers helps his reform school friend Tom Miller break into New York, they change their names to Hell and Verlaine and form Television Mk1. Creatively, the city is exploding with artists and musicians everywhere. Hell leaves to pontificate with The Heartbreakers and The Voidoids while Verlaine leads his group to cult greatness through a residency at CBGB's and literary collaboration with Patti Smith. When Television sign to Elektra, the result is Marquee Moon – a meld of angular city rhythms, plaintive prose and wiry guitar lines that will become a signature for thinking man's punk and probably the most important influence on post-modern pop. Astounding. ★★★★★
Jo Kendall

PHOTO: ERICA ESCHENBERG

Television Personalities

Part Time Punks: The Very Best Of

CHERRY RED CDMRED 152

Never has a band caused more confusion in punk circles than the TVPs did in 1978. Here was a quartet who had formed after witnessing The Jam play Hammersmith Odeon a year earlier, were clearly fuelled by the punk DIY ethic yet dared to lampoon the Capital's punk elite on Part Time Punks, an hilariously snide satire and a fabulous slice of shambolic amateurism with three chords, if that. An instant hit with John Peel, it sold 50,000 copies yet unbelievably failed to make its mark on the charts as did

their equally fab Where's Bill Grundy Now?, 14th Floor and Smashing Time – all of which are included here.
★★★★
Lois Wilson

Johnny Thunders And The Heartbreakers

LAMF: The Lost '77 Mixes

JUNGLE FREUD CD 044E

The Heartbreakers – snotty, ex-New York Dolls deadbeats – gatecrashed the London punk scene in late 1976. Capitalising on their heroic proto-punk legacy, Johnny Thunders and Jerry Nolan played straight-ahead rock'n'roll fast enough for the Roxy crowd, releasing LAMF (stands for Like A Mother Fucker) within a year. The record was a botch, scuppered by a notoriously muddy mix (marginally improved in this edition) and some stodgy studio-tamed performances. Although standouts like Dee Dee Ramone's junkie anthem Chinese Rocks still swagger, The Heartbreakers' most significant bequest to punk posterity remains their delivering of the Sex Pistols to twin evils Nancy Spungen and heroin. ★★
Matthew Lees

Johnny Thunders

Born Too Loose: The Best of Johnny Thunders

JUNGLE FREUD CD 60

"I don't want to live in the present/I make myself ill/ At times I'm happy." (Society Makes Me Sad). For rockers with a predilection for death-wish bad habits, tattooed gutter glam, and born-to-lose bravado, Johnny Thunders is a crucial rock'n'roll totem. This Best Of collects 15 barely-standing tracks from The Heartbreakers and 1980s solo LPs. Although there's nothing from 1978's So Alone, the closest Thunders got to a solo masterpiece, you do get a re-recorded You Can't Put Your Arms Around A Memory as bruised and tender as the original. ★★★
Matthew Lees

Extras: *Bonus CD of unreleased studio and live material.*

UK Subs

Another Kind Of Blues

CAPTAIN OI! AHOYCD134

Charlie Harper had it, didn't he? The old fella might have been getting on, but he had a certain growling presence. While it might not have put him in quite the same league of infamy as Jimmy Pursey, Harper managed to drag his band into the charts on more occasions than they ever could have realistically expected otherwise. Another Kind Of Blues shows the UK Subs at their best and worst. It's a feisty and combative slice of speed punk, with standout cuts Stranglehold and Tomorrow's Girls – re-recorded for 7-inch release – possessing surprisingly refined pop hooks for a band famous for their unsophisticated, full-on aural assault. The songs rarely knock over two minutes and 15 seconds, and while the original release boasted 17 songs squeezed on to two sides of vinyl, this CD manages to weigh in with 26 tracks.
★★★
Chris Hunt

Extras: *Nine bonus tracks, including alternate singles versions.*

The Vibrators

THE BEST OF THE VIBRATORS

ANAGRAM CDPUNK 43

Chalking up one of the first punk singles in November 1976 with We Vibrate, The Vibrators aren't as revered today as they should be, probably because of numerous line-up changes and the fact that they regularly changed labels. Fronted by Ian 'Knox' Carnochan, the group were more, er, mature than their peers, but adroitly fused the nervous energy of the Ramones with the trash of the New York Dolls. That Thunders-style decadence appeared on their biggest hits – Judy Says (Knock You In The Head) ("Watch out or you'll wind up dead") and Automatic Lover. They're still at it today. ★★★
Martin O'Gorman

Extras: *Includes five bonus album tracks.*

CHECK THIS OUT

The Undertones

The Undertones

ESSENTIAL ESMCD 831

Derry's Undertones were the Buzzcocks' main rivals to the punk pop crown and had a similar lyrical pre-occupation with bittersweet romance. Their debut album was first released in May 1979 but reissued only five months later to include the singles Teenage Kicks – a bona fide classic of yearning fantasy that DJ John Peel still proclaims to be his all-time favourite song – and Get Over You – an endearing tale of adolescent heartbreak. Other highlights include the boisterous stomp of Jimmy Jimmy (their first Top 20 hit), the cheerful optimism of Here Comes The Summer and the furious buzzsaw guitar attack of Family Entertainment. An indispensable collection. ★★★★★
Jon Harrington

Extras: *10 tracks including six B-sides and their debut EP.*

Sid Vicious
Sid Sings
VIRGIN CDV 2144

Poor old Sid. His post-Pistols career was doomed to failure and this ignominious document doesn't do his memory any favours. Shabbily recorded over two performances at Max's Kansas City five months before his death, Vicious tackles punk standards like I Wanna Be Your Dog and Stepping Stone, his 'hit' Something Else and his contribution to the Sex Pistols oeuvre, Belsen Was A Gas. "Do you wanna hear My Way, arseholes?" he taunts the audience. Before anyone can answer, the engineer slips in the studio version in the vain hope of getting away with it! ★★
Martin O'Gorman

Wire
Chairs Missing
ENIGMA 72361

Wire's second album arrived just 10 months after their debut. Abrasiveness was still evident, but it also had a new, keyboard-mediated mellifluousness. The lurching I Am The Fly could be read as a distancing from punk's descent into spike-haired vaudeville (a parody of the goofy punk dance routine known as The Dying Fly?). Whatever, in Outdoor Miner, the album contained a track of astonishing beauty and the band's biggest UK hit (straight in at 51). "Face worker, a serpentine miner," it went. "A roof falls, an underliner/ Of leaf structure, the egg timer." Now, that's showbiz.
Roy Wilkinson ★★★★
Extras: *Three tracks of singles and B-sides.*

Wreckless Eric
Greatest Stiffs
METRO METRCD044

Punk opened the door for the weird, the wonderful and the wreckless – and we thank it for that, for without punk there would have been no Wreckless Eric. Often critically sidelined in his prime, the passing of time has cemented his reputation, thanks largely to the ever growing popularity of his masterwork, Whole Wide World. That particular classic kicks off this 'Best Of' compilation, but as it brings together the choicest cuts from all three of his Stiff Records albums, there are plenty of other gems here. Forget that premier punk-hater Cliff Richard covered Broken Doll, listen instead to the strained vocals of the original and remember a time when eating a vase of daffodils was considered the height of rock'n'roll excess. ★★★★
Chris Hunt

The cult of Ray: the Spex tackle germ warfare.

X
Los Angeles
SLASH/RHINO 8122 743702

The ghost of Jim Morrison haunts this 1980 debut album from late-arriving, but long-lived LA punks: the band essay a frenetic cover of Soul Kitchen; Doors keyboardist, Ray Manzarek, produces and provides suitably melancholic organ to the nu-blues anomie of Unheard Music; and throughout, vocalist Exene Cervenka comes across as 'LA Woman' in keening, punk-poetess mode. The band looked even further back to rock'n'roll guitarist Billy Zoom (once a sideman with Gene Vincent) to peel off searing licks from the mid-'50s, rockabilly revolution, to add historical beef to their erudite but in-your-face sound. ★★★
Joe Cushley
Extras: *Two demos and three previously unissued tracks.*

X-Ray Spex
Germ Free Adolescents
CASTLE CMDDD369

Teenager Marion Elliot styled herself Poly Styrene, and helped redefine punk. Her braces and bin-liner anti-chic was matched by songs on X-Ray Spex's sole '70s LP which berated society's artificiality and obsession with beauty. These included three Top 30 hits; the yodelling power-punk of The Day The World Turned Day-Glo; the wonkily beautiful title track – "Cleanliness is her obsession... scrub away..." – and the Grace-Slick-on-helium-and-razor-blades of Identity – "When you look in the mirror do you smash it quick..." Inventive, humorous, feisty and filler-free. ★★★
Joe Cushley
Extras: *Oh Bondage Up Yours! single, Live At The Roxy album and demos on Disc 2.*

Various
CBGB's And The Birth Of US Punk
OCHO OCHOCD013

Though this compilation ostensibly celebrates the legendary New York venue CBGB's and it's owner Hilly Kristal – whose open booking policy allowed artists as varied as Television, the Ramones and Blondie (all included here) to hone their stage acts – it is more accurately a history of US punk stretching from the mid-'60s garage of The Seeds and The 13th Floor Elevators through The Velvet Underground and Detroit rockers The Stooges to '80s Californian political pranksters The Dead Kennedys. This eclectic mix of raucous misfits makes for great, hedonistic entertainment and an essential history lesson for those interested in the roots of punk. Worth purchasing for The Sonics' definitive, grungy version of Louie, Louie alone – the wildest record here. ★★★★
Jon Harrington

Various
The Greatest Punk Album Of All Time
DRESSED TO KILL 110

Like paddling in quick sand, listening to this album is a dangerous pursuit – one slip and you're buried, submerged in the world of punk obscurities, chasing after elusive Drones albums. From world-bestriding superstars such as the Sex Pistols and Iggy Pop and roots-of-punk acts such as the MC5, to other lesser-known masters such as Penetration, the track-listing reads like a scuzzy Who's Who of punk. However, unlike many punk compilations that stick to sure-fire bankable hits, this dressed-to-kill compilation is not afraid of introducing hard to listen to, harder to buy classics. If it's an education you're after, look no further. ★★★
Tom Bryant

Various
1-2-3-4: Punk And New Wave 1976-1979
UNIVERSAL MCD 60066

A retrospective box set is the antithesis of the punk ethos, but as a time capsule, 1-2-3-4 neatly ties together the genre's disparate threads over five CDs. Aside from the 'supergroups' (Sex Pistols, The Clash), the set dips into just about every area imaginable – the hardcore operating outside the mainstream (The Lurkers, Chelsea, 999); pub rock chancers (The Stranglers, Eddie And The Hot Rods); post-punk trailblazers (Public Image Limited, Gang Of Four); art school pranksters (Devo, Ultravox, XTC); and the American experience (The Dead Kennedys, Blondie, Television). It would be churlish to quibble over the track-listing, but that's all part of the fun, surely? ★★★★
Martin O'Gorman

Various
PUNK
COLUMBIA 5046782

Issued to coincide with Stephen Colegrave and Chris Sullivan's oral history of the times, Punk is an easily digested 2-CD collection of the "greatest hits" (Blitzkrieg Bop, New Rose, White Riot), while dipping into the proto-punks' catalogue for historical context (Search And Destroy, Kick Out The Jams). For the jaded, there are some unusual choices (Boredom represents the Buzzcocks' output), plus a few oddities that demonstrate punk's cultural diversity – Throbbing Gristle's Zyclon B Zombie, Ku Klux Klan by Steel Pulse and Contort Yourself by "Noo Yawk" performance artiste James White. Bizarre. ★★★
Martin O'Gorman

CHECK THIS OUT

Wire
Pink Flag
ENIGMA 72360

With '77's Pink Flag, this Home Counties quartet released a debut album whose oblique, cerebral qualities set them apart from the increasingly commodified punk herd. And while such tactics ruled out hit singles they also gave Pink Flag the potency to endure years after the fact. REM later covered Pink Flag track Strange on their Document LP. As the legal profession formally decreed, Elastica's Connection drew massively on Three Girl Rhumba. It seems that if Wire couldn't turn these short – Field Day For The Sundays only lasts 28 seconds – terse, intriguingly abstruse meditations on geo-politics, media intrusion and love into hits, then others could. ★★★★
Roy Wilkinson
Extras: *The track Options R.*

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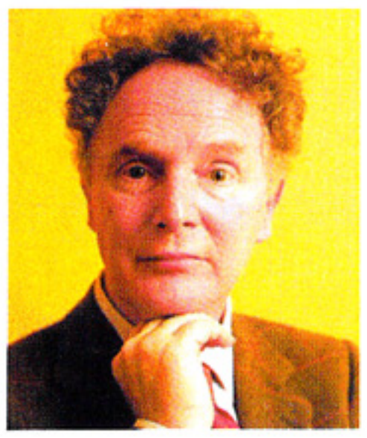
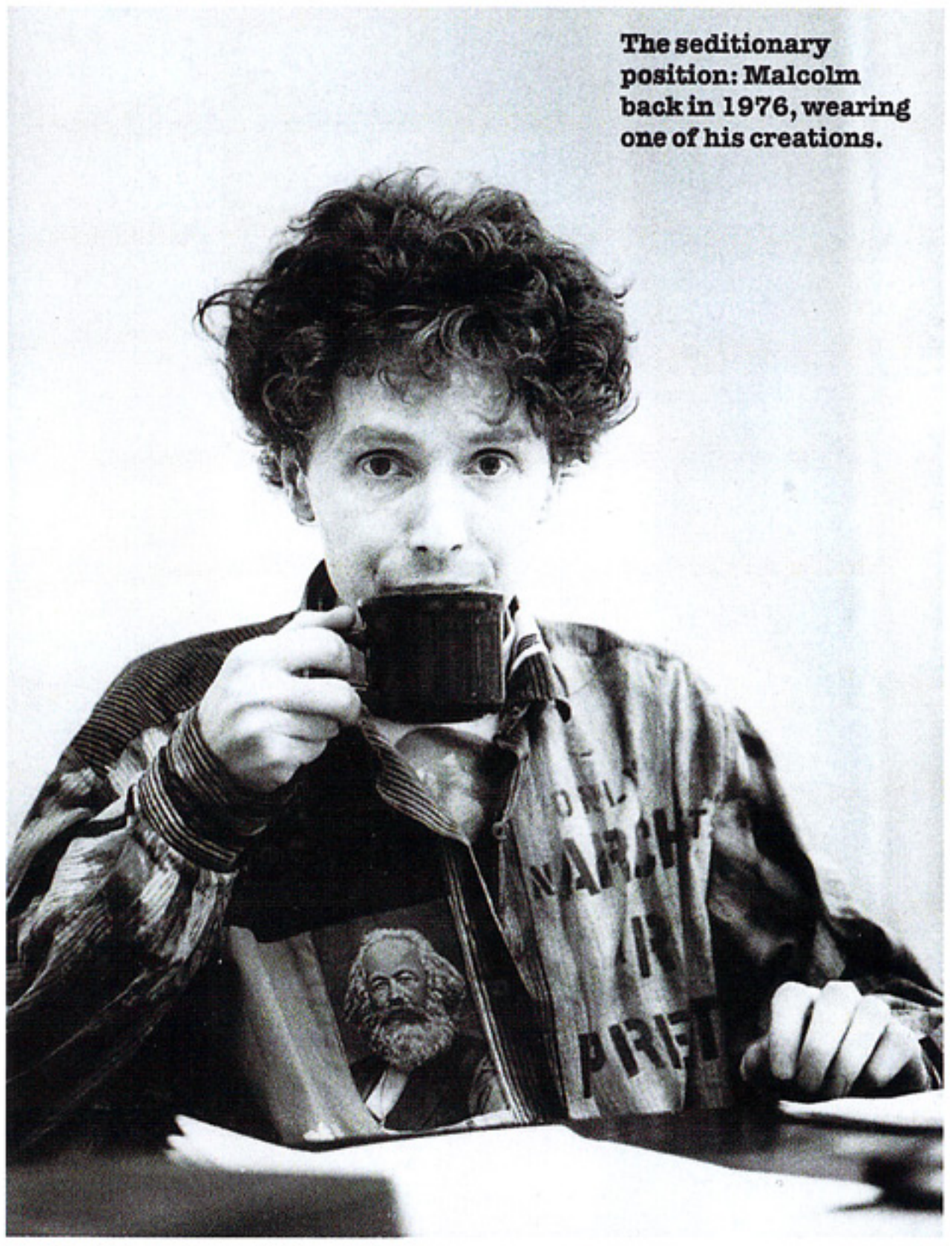


Afterword

By Malcolm McLaren

Manifestos are always written after the event. Looking back on punk, its lasting testimony, its manifesto if you like, is it allowed one to be a flamboyant failure rather than a benign success. It made failure a noble pursuit – the music, the fashion, the movement itself, it was all one big artistic statement born out of my life and times at art school. I remember after being thrown out of art school I walked down the King's Road with a mission. I wanted, *needed* to find a place where I and like-minded individuals could fulfil their creative urges. I wanted to bridge that gap between art school and the street. It was fate that I stumbled upon a hole in the wall at the darkest end of the King's Road that they called the World's End. There I ran a shop, which sold vestiges from the past, ruins from the '50s, records and clothes that were truly authentic, that were indebted to pop culture but also soon became pop culture themselves. Vivienne Westwood and myself bought sewing machines and started to design and make our own clothes, clothes that resembled nothing that had gone before them.



The seditionary position: Malcolm back in 1976, wearing one of his creations.

To begin with that shop was just a haven for myself and a few friends. But soon under a variety of names and guises it attracted a whole group of people, who were disenchanted with the world around them. They would come and sit in the shop. They wanted to be a part of this thing that we were creating. They were starting to feel different and to look different. It was a look that you could create for yourself. If you couldn't afford to buy a tailor-made vinyl outfit that Vivienne and I had created, you could just grab a bin liner and stick it over your head and it would still be groovy. This new fashion, this new way of thinking naturally had to have its own musical identity to bring it to life and four individuals stood out from the crowd. Taking their name partly from the shop, Sex, I then added the word Pistols. I was looking for something with sexual implications, a name that could act as a metaphor. Here was a band, the Sex Pistols, that would and did shoot down anything we didn't like, which in our case was absolutely everything. Naturally it was too wild to be tamed and once in the limelight it extended out onto the catwalk, into darkest Soho, then into club land and finally into every art college around the country. From one tiny shop on the King's Road in Chelsea we had created our own code of living, our own laws, our own identity. In other words, we had created the infrastructure for an alternative society.

"Punk allowed one to be a flamboyant failure rather than a benign success."

Malcolm McLaren
March 2002

PHOTOS: PENNIE SMITH, REX

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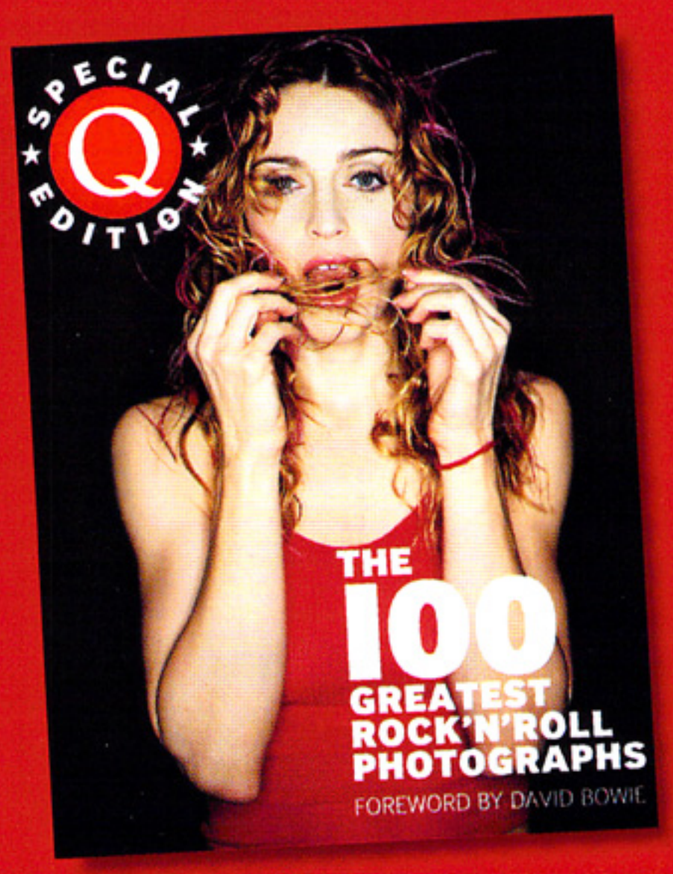

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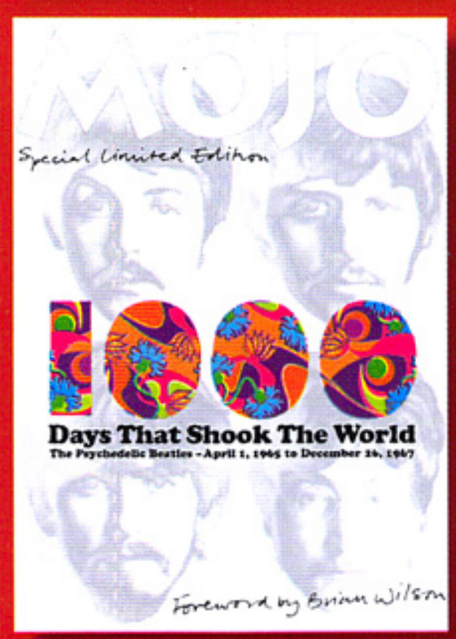

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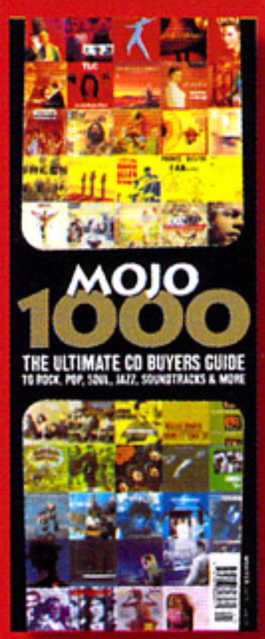

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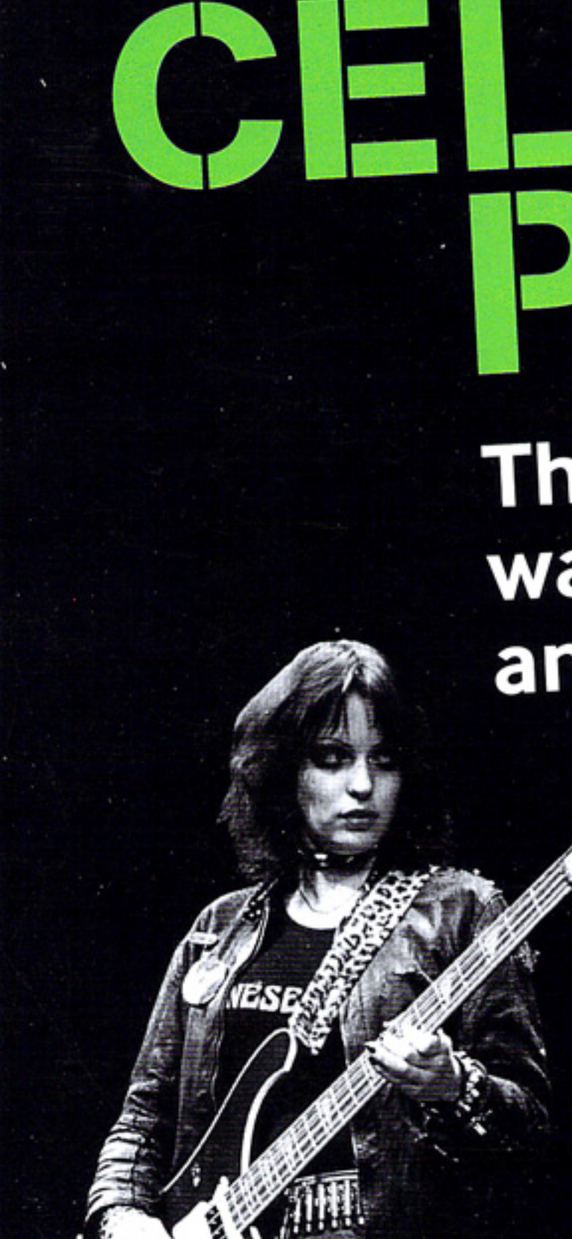
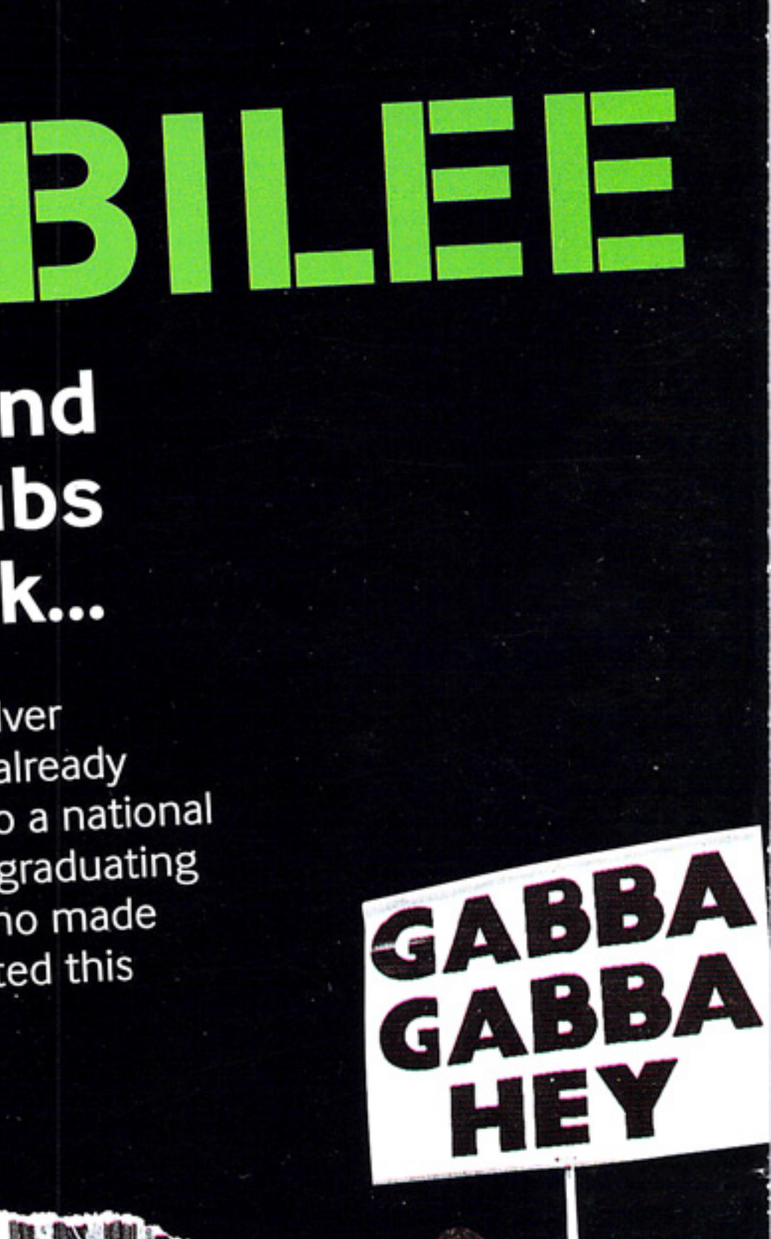
CELEBRATE PUNK'S JUBILEE

Throughout 1976 a new, raw sound was crawling out of the clubs, pubs and bars of London and New York...

By the time Britain was ready to celebrate the Queen's Silver Jubilee in June 1977, an alternative national anthem was already attacking the top of the charts and punk had exploded into a national high street phenomenon. This Q Punk Special looks back at the graduating Class of '77 – the bands, graphic artists and clothes designers who made it happen, and the journalists and photographers who documented this extraordinary two-year period.